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**THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGIOUS  
AWAKENING**



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TORONTO

THE PSYCHOLOGY  
of  
RELIGIOUS AWAKENING

BY  
ELMER T. CLARK, M.A., S.T.D., LL.D.

NEW YORK  
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1929

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Set up and printed.  
Published January, 1929

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
BY THE FERRIS PRINTING COMPANY

DEDICATED TO  
MARY ALVA CLARK  
MY WIFE AND FELLOW-WORKER



## PREFACE

THE present study is based on an analysis of the religious experiences of a large number of contemporary persons, most of whom were students in institutions of higher learning at the time the empirical data were secured. The method of obtaining and studying the data and a statement of the nature of the conclusions which the author has felt justified in deducing therefrom are set forth in the first chapter of the work, to which the careful attention of the reader is invited.

It is recognized that the data herein utilized are in large measure "subjective" in nature, a fact which will not commend the conclusions to those who have adopted the extreme mechanistic conceptions of the behavioristic school of American psychology. The same fact will doubtless appear objectionable to those who identify religion with conduct and reduce religious education to habit formation. The author scarcely hopes to satisfy these groups but he does wish to make himself clear. This he has endeavored to do in the first chapter, in the light of which the succeeding chapters should be read.

At the risk of anticipating the argument of the first chapter the author here deems it wise to call attention to the following points:

1. By religion is meant an individual's conscious attitude toward and relationship with God, and religion as thus defined is the sole object of study in the present work. Conduct and social relations are indeed insepa-

rable from religion and of tremendous import, but they are herein regarded as manifestations of religion and are excluded from the discussion. Unless this point is grasped and constantly borne in mind the discussion will not be clear.

2. The object of study is the personal religious experience as the individual himself conceives it and not as interpreted for him by an outside observer. The physiological aspects of psychology are of the utmost importance and are receiving adequate treatment elsewhere, but the personal experience of the individual is being almost wholly neglected by careful students. Extreme behaviorists quite generally question the ability of an individual to interpret his own experience, but the fact of psychological importance is not the harmony of his descriptions with physiology but that he thinks as he does. It is his own thinking that we are at present investigating.

3. In view of the fact that many persons coöperated in collecting the data of the present study the question of the uniformity of interpretation and use of terms will arise. It should be stated that all interpretations were made by the author and all terms of significance in the conclusions are the author's own and are used with uniformity. The respondents were not asked to evaluate or interpret but to describe their experiences. The coöperating instructors secured these descriptions in their own way and expressed their opinions thereon, but while these opinions were carefully considered they were in no case incorporated in the data. Such terms as "emotional stimulus," "sense of sin," "stern theology," "good home training," "definite crisis," "religious awakening," and the like were selected for use by the author after all the



data were in, and each record was studied by the author and tabulated by his own hand.

The records of the present study constitute the largest collection of personal religious experiences ever brought together, and these records are a mine of data for the workers in this field. It is a matter of great regret that their extensiveness makes it impossible to include them in the present work. The author, however, ventures to hope that they will be made the subject of much further study, and he will be glad to make them available for that purpose.

It is here necessary to acknowledge the indispensable service rendered by the coöperating colleges and the competent persons who so carefully directed the investigation therein. They not only secured the data by personal contact with the individuals, but they checked each record for untrustworthy factors, discarding all experiences of doubtful value, and then made a preliminary tabulation and study of the whole. While the final statistical study was made by the author, the findings of the coöperating instructors were in all cases given consideration. The writer, therefore, gratefully acknowledges the contribution made by the following persons in gathering the original data for the present work:

Prof. Ralph H. Hickok, Wells College  
Miss Eliza H. Kendrick, Wellesley College  
Mrs. Alma Sydenstricker, Agnes Scott College  
Prof. Irwin R. Beiler, Allegheny College  
Prof. Herbert R. Purington, Bates College  
Prof. C. C. Alexander, Birmingham-Southern College  
Prof. J. F. Balzer, Carleton College  
Prof. Zoe Davies, Carroll College  
Prof. T. D. D. Quaid, Kidd Key College  
Rev. Marvin T. Haw, University of Missouri

Prof. W. G. Henry, Emory University  
Prof. H. L. Beam, Heidelberg College  
Prof. John Meighan, Hillsdale College  
Dean A. J. Culler, Hiram College  
Prof. Wallace N. Stearns, Illinois Woman's College  
Miss Maidee Smith, La Grange College  
Mr. Everett R. Clinchy, Wesleyan University  
Prof. G. E. Rosser, Wesleyan College  
President E. R. Stanford, Westmoorland College  
Miss Lessie Mae Hall, Woman's College of Alabama  
Prof. Frederick S. Goodrich, Albion College  
Dean M. E. Sentelle, Davidson College  
Prof. J. S. Seneker, Southern Methodist University  
Miss Georgia Harkness, Elmira College  
Prof. John C. Orr, Emory and Henry College  
Dean W. A. Donovan, Newton Theological Institute  
Prof. Thos. Kinloch Nelson, Episcopal Theological  
Seminary  
Mrs. W. S. Neighbors, Martha Washington College  
President F. G. Branch, Andrew College  
Prof. W. M. Alexander, Central College  
Rev. James W. Workman, University of Arkansas  
Prof. S. M. Mims, Clarendon College  
Prof. Mason Crum, Columbia College  
Mrs. J. M. Workman, Henderson Brown College  
Dean Sallie P. Betts, Louisburg College  
Prof. A. J. W. Myers, Hartford School of Religious  
Education  
Prof. H. L. Gray, Southwestern College  
President Wm. H. Frazer, Queens College  
Prof. Pliny A. Allen, Lombard College  
Dean E. M. Stanton, Lon Morris College  
Prof. E. L. Peerman, Morris Harvey College  
Prof. Isaac T. Headland, Mount Union College  
Prof. E. E. Jones, Northfield Seminary  
Prof. Edward E. Domm, Northwestern College  
Prof. G. W. Fiske, Oberlin College  
Prof. J. S. Engle, Otterbein College  
Prof. E. Ehrlich Smith, Randolph-Macon College

Prof. Ismar J. Peritz, Syracuse University  
Miss Sue Belle Mann, Texas Woman's College  
Dean J. Milton Vance, College of Wooster  
Miss Lucy E. Keith, Western College  
Prof. W. Taliaferro Thompson, Union Theological  
Seminary  
Prof. Albert J. Murphy, University of Pittsburgh  
Prof. L. L. Carpenter, University of South Carolina  
Prof. John H. Montgomery, University of Southern  
California  
Prof. L. W. Crawford, George Peabody College for  
Teachers  
Prof. J. L. Kessler, Vanderbilt University  
Dean Hazel Belle Mileham, Southern College  
President R. S. Tomlin, Paine College  
Prof. John Hope, Morehouse College  
Mr. Charles H. Yarbrough, Ovoca Methodist As-  
sembly  
Rev. J. Q. Schisler, Mount Sequoyah Methodist As-  
sembly

The extent of the author's indebtedness to any other students is indicated by the references throughout the work. Especial mention should be made of his obligation to Professor L. W. Crawford, Ph.D., Professor of Religious Education in George Peabody College for Teachers, who has read and criticized the entire manuscript and rendered invaluable coöperation throughout the long period during which the work was in progress. It is not too much to say that without Dr. Crawford's sympathy and help the task could scarcely have been completed.



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## CHARTS

*Statistical summaries have not been grouped at the end of the book owing to mechanical difficulties; they are interspersed throughout the text running in sequence.*

SUMMARY OF TOTALS . . . . .	Opposite Page 22
SUMMARY OF GROUPS . . . . .	Opposite and following Page 23



**THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGIOUS  
AWAKENING**





# THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGIOUS AWAKENING

## CHAPTER I

### THE NATURE AND DATA OF THE STUDY

AMONG peoples of every age and clime religious phenomena have been prevalent and to them all races have attached vital significance, yet such phenomena were subjected to little careful study until recent years. The reasons for this neglect are doubtless to be found in the intimate nature of the phenomena themselves and in their close attachment to what people have regarded as divine beings, relations, and influences. Even at the present day (multitudes of people—even among outstanding religious leaders—still deeply resent every attempt to study the facts of religion as other facts are studied, on the theory that religion is a divine manifestation, that “the ways of God are past finding out,” or that investigation in this realm means placing unholy hands on the holy of holies.)

(This very reticence on the part of the religious man to subjecting his religion to critical scrutiny is itself a fact of psychological importance. It evidences the tremendous significance of the religious consciousness to the religious man himself; it hints of the depths of life plumbed by religious conceptions,) and should serve as a warning to students of the mental life that the facts of

religious consciousness are not to be superficially dealt with or easily explained, much less to be disregarded or dismissed as of minor importance.

### *Previous Studies of Religious Experience*

The beginnings of scientific investigation in this field, made by anthropology, consisted of descriptions of religious rites and observances among primitive peoples. Beginning with the appearance of Prichard's *Natural History of Man* in 1843, this science has made rapid progress and provided a mass of descriptive data. While a few workers have speculatively inquired into the probable social and psychological origins of religious phenomena, anthropologists have commonly contented themselves with descriptions of religious manifestations.

It remained for the twentieth century, or the closing years of the nineteenth, to undertake a serious investigation of religion as it arises in the individual human soul. Even so plain a fact as that conversion lies almost wholly within the years of adolescence was not pointed out until Dr. G. Stanley Hall delivered his Harvard lectures in Boston in 1881.<sup>1</sup> Hall's pioneer work bore quick and abundant fruit, however, for between 1881 and the beginning of the new century such students as Burnham,<sup>2</sup> Daniels,<sup>3</sup> Lancaster,<sup>4</sup> Lueba,<sup>5</sup> Starbuck,<sup>6</sup> James,<sup>7</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> Hall: *Adolescence*, Vol. I, p. 292.

<sup>2</sup> "The Study of Adolescence," *Ped. Sem.*, June, 1891, pp. 174-195.

<sup>3</sup> The New Life: "A Study of Regeneration," *Am. Jour. of Psy.*, Oct., 1893, pp. 61-106.

<sup>4</sup> "Psychology and Pedagogy of Adolescence," *Ped. Sem.*, July, 1897, pp. 61-128.

<sup>5</sup> "A Study in the Psychology of Religious Phenomena," *Ibid.*, April, 1896, pp. 309-385.

<sup>6</sup> "A Study of Conversion," *Am. Jour. Psy.*, Jan., 1897, pp. 268-308; "Some Aspects of Religious Growth," *Ibid.*, Oct., 1897, pp. 70-124.

<sup>7</sup> *Varieties of Religious Experience*.

Coe \* made the investigations on which the whole structure of the new science of the psychology of religion has been erected.

William James, in his *Varieties of Religious Experience*, delivered as the Gifford Lectures at Edinburgh in 1901-1902, elaborately depicted the "sick soul" and the process of its recovery in conversion or "unification," using the biographies of religious persons as his source of data. In so doing he virtually created the psychology of religion as a branch of science by giving the study the prestige of his name. Starbuck began his work even before James delivered the Gifford Lectures, publishing some results of his empirical studies in the *American Journal of Psychology* in 1897 \* and amplifying them in his *The Psychology of Religion*, first published in 1899. Starbuck laid the real foundations of the science by actually analyzing the religious experiences of a large group of individuals and reducing the results to statistical form; all succeeding writers, including James, have relied upon his data when their work left the realm of philosophy and sought a firmer basis in the facts of experience. Starbuck tabulated the experiences of 192 persons who had undergone conversion, used 1265 records in his analysis of the age of conversion, and studied the experiences of 237 individuals who had never been converted, as he used the term, but whose religious life had been a process of growth. Starbuck's method was to go directly to the individuals themselves, and by means of question lists secure records of their religious experiences. His work remains to-day as the most complete and authoritative of its kind.

\* *The Spiritual Life*.

\* "A Study of Conversion," Jan., 1897, pp. 268-308; "Some Aspects of Religious Growth," Oct., 1897, pp. 70-124.

In 1900 Professor George Albert Coe published his *The Spiritual Life*, in which he set forth the results of his study of 77 persons. Dr. Coe, though his data were limited, made an invaluable contribution by showing the relation between temperament and types of religious experience. He went a step beyond Starbuck in his method, not only securing the autobiographical statements of his subjects but also checking these by interviewing the associates of the respondents and then verifying the whole by ascertaining reactions under hypnosis. In 1904 appeared the monumental two-volume work of G. Stanley Hall on *Adolescence, Its Psychology and Its Relation to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion, and Education*, in which this pioneer covered the whole field and set forth in his exhaustive pages the whole status of the subject as it then existed.<sup>10</sup>

Many writers have followed and works on the psychology of religion have been regularly appearing. Many have made lasting contributions, but they have largely consisted of interpretations and applications of the first-hand data gathered by Starbuck, Coe, and their fellow workers.

### *Need for Further Empirical Study*

In the thirty years that have passed since the above-mentioned investigations were published, profound changes have occurred in the environmental conditions which seem likely to affect types of religious experience. Education has become more widespread. The great migration from the rural sections to the cities has been

<sup>10</sup> For a history of the psychology of religion see Pratt, "The Psychology of Religion," in *Harvard Theological Review*, Vol. I, 1908.

under way, involving great changes in standards and manner of living. The revival, once almost the sole instrument of religious propaganda in America, has declined in influence and effectiveness until it wins few converts from the ranks of adult sinners. The critical and scientific spirit has reached the rank and file of the people and brought about far-reaching changes in ideas concerning the Bible and other religious conceptions. Theology has changed too, if not in its credal statements, certainly in its presentation and interpretation to the people; the doctrines of eternal damnation, personality of the devil, total depravity, and similar theories are seldom or never heard in present-day sermons. Religious education, which is now an influential instrument in every leading religious denomination, has definitely passed from the stage of instruction in Biblical facts to a thorough program of spiritual development, professing to find the newborn child in spiritual harmony with God and proposing to keep him in that state without any spiritual or moral hiatus, thus eliminating the necessity for the tremendous emotional upheaval which the older evangelism made essential to salvation or at least highly desirable.

These and other changes of similar import have occurred since the empirical researches of Starbuck, Coe, and others were made. Many of the most influential religious ideas and stimuli were involved in such changes, and it seems not unlikely that the prevalent type of religious experience would be influenced thereby. To determine whether any such influence has been exerted and, if so, in what direction, it has seemed advisable to undertake a new and parallel study for purposes of comparison.

*Problem and Purpose of the Present Study*

Such is the problem and purpose of the present investigation. Assuming the general accuracy of the studies made a generation ago for the situation then prevailing, this study undertakes to make an entirely new and independent research among contemporary religious persons for the purpose of endeavoring to determine in what respects, if any, the religious experiences of these persons differ from the experiences of those of the past generation, what influences have operated to bring about any changes discernible, the general trends of religious education in the matter of individual religious experience, and what may be reasonably expected in the future. The present study will, it is hoped, throw some light upon these and some related questions.

*What Is (Religious Experience?)*

In this study an attempt will be made to view religious experience as it is interpreted by the religious individual himself.<sup>11</sup> Although the term "religion" has been given a large number of meanings,<sup>12</sup> the religious person is likely to experience little difficulty concerning terminology. In the present investigation the term will be taken in the simplest sense as being (the individual's conscious attitude toward and relationship with whatever that individual conceives to be the divine forces or influences having ultimate control over his destiny.<sup>13</sup>) In the case of such persons as those whose experiences con-

<sup>11</sup> It is, however, recognized that entire objectivity in such a study is impossible and that in the determining of categories, methods of procedure, and interpretation of results the personal equation cannot be completely eliminated. The study is nevertheless entirely impartial.

<sup>12</sup> For a list of definitions see Leuba: *A Psychological Study of Religion*, Appendix.

<sup>13</sup> Pratt: *The Religious Consciousness*, p. 2.

stitute the data of the study here undertaken, that force is conceived in personal terms as the God of Christian theology, and the attitude toward and relationship with Him constitutes the religion being considered. (It is recognized that many elements, such as moral duties, beliefs, and forms of worship, are inextricably bound up with this attitude, but these are regarded as concomitants and manifestations rather than a part of the vital principle of religion itself.)

When, therefore, the definite religious attitude is formed and the personal relationship entered into, or when the individual becomes aware that he has made a definite reaction to and assumed a definite attitude toward his God, then he has undergone a religious awakening or experience. "It is a conscious reaction or group of reactions in which an attitude of dependence is taken to a Superhuman Power or to the Superhuman Power (usually conceived as personal) with the underlying purpose more or less definitely formed of soliciting the aid and help of the Powers or Power so as to secure the satisfaction of needs or desires" which is herein regarded as being the essential element and nature of religious experience.<sup>14</sup>

### *Sources of Data for the Study*

The above definition of religious experience automatically determines, on the one hand, the method of the present study and, on the other, the sources of data therefor. If religious experience is a reaction on the part of an individual, then obviously that reaction is the object of study and access thereto must be secured. It is just as obvious that, in the present state of our knowl-

<sup>14</sup> Strickland: *Psychology of Religious Experience*, p. 53.

edge at least, the individual himself is the best, indeed the sole, judge as to what his reaction is or was. For him, religion is what he thinks it is, and his thoughts thereon are final for him. While its manifestations and social implications are subject to objective determination, for the religious man himself his own attitude of mind remains the vital and all-important element in his religion.

The method of investigation in this field, therefore, is an analysis of a representative group of actual religious experiences, which were obtained, for the most part, in American colleges and universities by trained and competent observers, members of the teaching staff. Sixty such teachers coöperated in the investigation.

As a guide in securing information especially desired a question list was worked out and then submitted for criticism to the coöperating educators, which criticisms were embodied in the guide finally adopted. These lists were then placed in the hands of the professors, who secured the data in any manner deemed by them most likely to produce accurate results. Some obtained the facts by personal interview, others asked their graduate students to study certain cases, while still others delivered the lists to their students to be filled out as a class-room exercise. The professors then verified the records, and made a preliminary study of the cases in the light of their individual knowledge of the subjects concerned. All records were then forwarded to the writer for final analysis and tabulation, which work was done without assistance in order to guard against variations due to differences in individual interpretation.

The question list used as a guide in securing the information was as follows:



### I. GENERAL

1. Age?
2. Sex?
3. Where reared (country, village, town, or city)?
4. Father's occupation?
5. Were parents Christians (both or which)?
6. What is your education (elementary, high school, college, post-graduate)?
7. What is, or will be, your occupation?
8. Do you consider yourself religious?
9. What denomination?

### II. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

10. Describe your religious training at home.
11. Did you attend Sunday School as a child? How regularly? How long?
12. Are you conscious that the Sunday School influenced you in consciously becoming a Christian? In what way?
13. Did you hear preaching regularly as you grew up?
14. What was the general type of preaching and its theology, such as total depravity, sin, salvation, damnation, etc.?

### III. CONVERSION

15. Have you ever undergone the experience commonly called conversion? (If not, see question 22.)
16. When?
17. Where?
18. Describe the circumstances and your feelings leading up to the experience.
19. Describe the experience itself and your feelings during and immediately following it.
20. What were the immediate aftereffects of the experience?

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21. Are you conscious of any influence of the experience remaining in your life to-day? What?

### IV. RELIGIOUS GROWTH

22. If you did not have a definite conversion experience, when did you become aware that you were religious?
23. What were your feelings and what did it mean to you when you first realized that you were religious?
24. Describe the process by which you consciously became religious.
25. What do you call this process—conversion, acceptance, realization, or what?
26. Remarks.

### *The Universe of Cases for the Study*

The religious experiences of 2174 individuals were finally received and tabulated. Of these 754 were males and 1420 females. The records came from sixty institutions of learning and two Methodist summer assemblies for young people. Among the institutions were five theological seminaries, four state universities, two colleges for negroes, one college for teachers, and eighteen colleges for women. Of the total group of individuals, 66 were negroes, 139 were of the non-student class, and 81 were above forty years of age. With reference to denominational affiliation there were 985 Methodists, 366 Presbyterians, 252 Baptists, and 133 belonging to the confirmation group of churches—Catholic, Lutheran, and Episcopal; 1125 belonged to the Southern evangelical group and 478 were adherents of evangelical bodies of the North. The children of ministers and missionaries numbered 280, while 567 were themselves looking forward to the same callings. As to place of residence, 592

were reared in cities, 893 in towns, 220 in villages, and 423 in the open country.

It is believed that there is brought together in the present study the largest and most representative collection of such data ever gathered. There are more than five times as many cases as were used in the famous study of Starbuck, excluding those from which he obtained only the age of conversion. These records were carefully and individually studied and the results tabulated according to the usual statistical method, more than fifty thousand entries on the large sheets being necessary in the complete tabulation.

### *Limitations of the Study*

Certain limitations are of necessity imposed. In the first place, a limit is set by the nature and method of the study itself, which is concerned only with the experience of the individual who claims to be a religious person. While the importance of what may be called the biological aspects of psychology is recognized, such aspects do not constitute the major problem herein considered. The problem is not so much what happens in the brain and nervous system of the Christian; it is what he considers to be the process as a result of which he calls himself a Christian. No excursion will be taken into theological or philosophical fields; neither will any attempt be made to determine the objective reality or validity of the conceptions to which the religious man attaches his faith. While all of these are legitimate and important fields of inquiry, they lie beyond the scope of the present discussion, requiring methods and sources of data quite different from those herein employed.

In the second place, the study is largely, though not

exclusively, based on the experiences of young American Protestant Christians of the superior type.<sup>15</sup> While some data are drawn, for purposes of comparison, from older persons of limited education, most of those whose experiences form the basis of the study were students in colleges and universities. It should be borne in mind, however, that this merely means that the boys and girls involved possess the intelligence necessary to the pursuit of college studies; since practically all of them attained to a definite religious attitude before entering college, the scholastic environment could at most give tone to their descriptions. From the standpoints of sex, geographical distribution, denominational affiliation, and type of institution in which the students were enrolled the data seem as representative as could be desired.

### *The Authenticity of the Study*

It is recognized that certain dangers attend the use of data drawn from the personal testimony of people and that the gathering and use of such must be carefully safeguarded. On the other hand, the method has recognized values and yields data which cannot otherwise be secured. The arguments in support of and derogatory to the method are well known and need not be repeated here.<sup>16</sup>

In studying the religious experiences of individuals personal testimony is essential, since objective methods of study have not been developed. While such methods

<sup>15</sup> By "superior" is meant only that the subjects, being college students, may be regarded as being above the average in intelligence. Such persons were chosen because of their accessibility, the probable greater reliability of their observations, and the fact that their experiences are probably more real and permanent, owing to a better rational control over the emotions.

<sup>16</sup> See Coe: *The Psychology of Religion*, pp. 43-56.

may be used to good purpose in determining the physical basis and social manifestations of religion, in the matter of conscious experience it must again be emphasized that since a man's religion is what he thinks it is, he must be the final judge. "The essential nature of religious experience consists in those very elements which are not apparent to a bystander who may wish to observe in order to secure data for description and explanation. It would look as though the subject who has the experience would have to be depended upon for the most important facts. These facts are, of course, facts of the inner life and for the most part not observable by the bystander at all." <sup>17</sup>

To discredit subjective reactions when the whole problem is that of the subjective state of the one who reacts tends to destroy the very problem itself. Further, the fact that the present treatise is a comparative study enforces the duty of employing the same instruments used in the studies with which the comparison is to be made.

Workers in the field of the psychology of religion, though striving to perfect objective methods of study, are encouraged in the use of the only methods at present available by the fact that the results hitherto obtained have proved reliable and have been verified, and not discredited, by other tests. The psychology of religion, now recognized as a legitimate science, was created and its valid data obtained by the personal method. Such outstanding investigators as Hall,<sup>18</sup> Starbuck,<sup>19</sup> Coe,<sup>20</sup> Ames <sup>21</sup> and others have used the questionnaire with un-

<sup>17</sup> Strickland: *Psychology of Religious Experience*, p. 17.

<sup>18</sup> *Adolescence*, Vol. II, pp. 317, 318.

<sup>19</sup> *The Psychology of Religion*, Chs. II, XIV.

<sup>20</sup> *The Spiritual Life*, pp. 109, 110.

<sup>21</sup> *The Psychology of Religious Experience*, pp. 239-245.

challenged results. James,<sup>22</sup> Davenport,<sup>23</sup> Pratt,<sup>24</sup> Underwood<sup>25</sup> and others have relied upon published autobiographies, which really rest upon the same general basis as the questionnaire, namely, personal testimony of experience. Various German students have recently drawn data from the diaries of adolescents and autobiographical novels,<sup>26</sup> another adaptation of the same method. All of these sources have proved valid when their results have been tested by accepted knowledge and checked against the results of other researches in the same field.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>22</sup> *Varieties of Religious Experience*.

<sup>23</sup> *Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals*.

<sup>24</sup> *The Religious Consciousness*.

<sup>25</sup> *Conversion: Christian and Non-Christian*.

<sup>26</sup> See Kupky: *The Religious Development of Adolescents*, and Bibliography therein.

<sup>27</sup> It is interesting, almost amusing, to observe writers taking great pains to state the objections to the so-called "subjective" method and then proceeding to cite and build upon the accepted conclusions which Starbuck, James, Coe, and others have derived from the use of that same method. For example, Kupky, in his *The Religious Development of Adolescents* (p. 17), remarks that "whoever is not trained in the technique of introspection will never be able to furnish scientifically useful material for the investigation of mental processes so intimate as those of the religious life." He then proceeds to use as his own source of data the diaries of adolescents, which are as subjective as data could well be; and in the end he proposes to "test and confirm the results" by the findings of Starbuck (p. 25), which were obtained by introspection on the part of quite ordinary people. Coe, in his *The Psychology of Religion*, in 1916, stated at length the well-known objections to the questionnaire, seemingly forgetful that in 1900 he had, in his *The Spiritual Life*, made his greatest contribution by that very method and that the conclusions reached by study of his respondents' answers were verified by his laboratory experiments in hypnotism; and in his chapter on Conversion he remarks that Starbuck's studies, all made by the questionnaire method, had made known the primary data of conversion (p. 152), and then proceeds to use Starbuck's findings throughout his chapter (pp. 152-154, 162, 171). Strickland also, in his *Psychology of Religious Experience* (p. 63), states objections to the question list and then on the same page admits that in practice it gives valuable original data that can be secured no other way; he also (p. 62) says that Starbuck's work was "so thoroughly done that its main results have stood."

The outside inquiries and the laboratory experiments in hypnotism carried out by Coe all reached the same general conclusions as the data obtained by direct questioning of his subjects.<sup>22</sup> William James was frankly skeptical of the questionnaire procedure proposed by his student, Starbuck, and remarked, "I damned the whole project with my words of faint praise." James recited the usual arguments in opposition to the method. When, however, Starbuck proceeded in spite of this discouragement, James wrote the Preface to his book and confessed, "I must say that the results amply justify his own confidence in his methods, and that I feel somewhat ashamed at present of the littleness of my own faith." And it was James' opinion that "the examples ought to find imitators."<sup>23</sup>

It remains true, however, that the method herein employed should be used with extreme care. Much depends upon the nature of the information sought. Correct interpretations and evaluations of psychological phenomena, their causes and motivations, are not to be expected of average young people, untrained in the art of introspection. In the present study great care was exercised at this point. A number of Starbuck's questions were eliminated as lying in a realm too deep and complicated for reliable responses: "In what ways were you brought to a condition to need an awakening:—faulty teachings, bad associations, appetites, passions, etc.?" "What forces and motives led you to seek a higher life?" "State a few bottom truths embodying your own deepest feelings. What would you now be and do if you realised all your own ideals of the higher life?" "If you have passed through a series of beliefs and attitudes,

<sup>22</sup> *The Spiritual Life.*

<sup>23</sup> Starbuck: *The Psychology of Religion*, Chs. VII-X.

mark out the stages of growth and what you now feel to be the trend of your life." "What motives have been most prominent at different times:—fears, remorse, wish for approval of others, etc.?"<sup>30</sup> These and other of Starbuck's questions, while yielding a view of the respondent's present state of mind, seem to lie beyond his capacity of accurate interpretation, while in many cases the general nature of the reply is quite clearly suggested.

In the guide prepared for the present study only the most obvious information and descriptions of experience were sought. In question 11, "Are you conscious that the Sunday School influenced you in consciously becoming a Christian?" the object was simply to discover the individual's opinion of the effectiveness of the leading agency of religious education and to secure, if possible, a general estimate of its value from that angle, rather than to probe into the deeper causes of experience. In question 14, "What was the general type of preaching and its theology, such as total depravity, sin, salvation, damnation, etc.?" the slight suggestion as to the nature of the answer expected was made deliberately, since especial information was sought with reference to the sterner aspects of theology in order to determine, if possible, whether such theology found reflection in a definite type of experience. Only one question proved to be entirely worthless as a source of information—question 25, "What do you call this process—conversion, acceptance, realization, or what?" Here the respondents were clearly unable to classify their experiences and usually chose one of the words mentioned, a fact which in itself has psychological significance. Altogether, it seems that the

<sup>30</sup> *The Psychology of Religion*, pp. 23, 24, 185.



questions submitted were simple and plain enough to be answered accurately by any intelligent person.

It is not claimed that data derived by the method used are necessarily to be placed on a par of accuracy with tests of an objective nature. Religious experience obviously cannot be calculated with the same definiteness that a child's I. Q. can be determined by the use of the Binet-Simon instrument. Neither is mathematical certainty to be expected in a field in which individual differences and environmental conditions weigh so heavily and the whole of life is so intricately involved as in the personal religious experience of the Christian. General trends only can be indicated with certainty. More than this the present study does not attempt.

## CHAPTER II

### TYPES OF RELIGIOUS AWAKENING

RELIGIOUS awakening as herein understood has been defined in Chapter I as being the process by which the individual makes a definite reaction to, assumes a definite attitude toward, or enters into a personal relationship with his God. In discussing types of such awakenings it is difficult to establish fixed categories, since the nature of the experiences depends largely upon temperament and the stimuli presented. So prominent is the personal equation that it may be said that there are as many types of religious awakening as there are religious individuals. Nevertheless such categories must be formed as a necessary preliminary to a study of the influence on experience of the various elements of environment. This may be done within general limits, yet it should be borne in mind that the different types tend to overlap and merge into each other.

#### *Various Meanings of "Conversion"*

The term "conversion" figures prominently in most of the studies with which comparisons are herein attempted. It is, indeed, an important word in most discussions of religious awakening and the psychology of religious phenomena. It appears necessary, therefore, to determine the connotation of that term before undertaking to dis-

tinguish between the various types of contemporary experience.

In popular evangelical phraseology conversion is a covering term used to designate the whole process through which a person becomes religious, irrespective of type. Religious workers customarily say that every Christian individual has been converted, applying the word to every form of phenomena, from cases of growth so gradual that no definite experience can be recalled to emotional cataclysms not unlike that undergone by St. Paul.<sup>1</sup> In such a covering sense it is also used by G. Stanley Hall, who calls conversion "a natural, normal, universal, and necessary process at a stage when life pivots over from an autocentric to a heterocentric basis."<sup>2</sup>

The word is not always used in such an inclusive sense, however; in fact, a variety of different meanings are attached to it as employed in contemporary literature.<sup>3</sup> Because of the confusion of thought thus entailed it is difficult to use the word in a treatise wherein accuracy of statement is a desideratum; if it is utilized at all it seems necessary to define it more strictly than is customarily done.

On such a general definition as that adopted by Hall there seems little reason for retaining the word, since conversion then becomes synonymous with adolescent growth and may even lose its religious content entirely without in any way affecting the character of the experience as conversion. As inclusively employed to characterize the dawn of the religious consciousness without reference to type it is certainly valuable, yet it seems

<sup>1</sup> Acts ix, 1-9.

<sup>2</sup> *Adolescence*, Vol. II, p. 301.

<sup>3</sup> Coe enumerates six distinct senses in which it is used, *The Psychology of Religion*, p. 150.

obvious that a term which adequately characterizes the cataclysmic awakening of Saint Augustine,<sup>4</sup> for example, is inadequate to describe the experience of Edward Everett Hale<sup>5</sup> or any other person who is unable to remember a time when he was not religious.

(The English word "conversion" signifies a turning about, a definite change of front, a passing from one state of being to an altogether different state as a definite and specific act. When used in the realm of religious phenomena it would seem more accurate to apply it to the emotional experiences of the more radical sort in which a sudden change from irreligion or nonreligion to religion is involved.) For such an experience that of Saint Augustine may be taken as a general norm. In such a sense it is used by such careful writers as Coe and Starbuck. In the same sense it will be used in the present discussion, although little use will be made of the term herein save in quotations from other writers.

### *The Conversion Phenomena*

Writers on the psychology of religion have generally concentrated their attention on the radical conversion experiences to the relative neglect of milder types of awakening. Only Starbuck has given the latter types a proportionate amount of study; for him, however, there are but two types, conversion and non-conversion.<sup>6</sup> James frankly admits that he confined himself to the radical experiences because they were more interesting: "Of the volitional type of conversion," he says, "it would

<sup>4</sup> Augustine: *Confessions*, VIII, 5-12.

<sup>5</sup> This oft-cited case is found in the *Forum*, Vol. X, p. 70, and is quoted by Starbuck, James, Ames, and others. For this and similar cases see James: *Varieties of Religious Experiences*, Chs. IV and V.

<sup>6</sup> *The Psychology of Religion*.

be easy to give examples, but they are as a rule less interesting than those of the self-surrender type, in which subconscious effects are more abundant and often startling. *I will therefore hurry to the latter.*"<sup>1</sup> The concentration of students on this one type of awakening has tended to magnify it out of proportion of its importance, yet it makes necessary a consideration of the conversion phenomena on the part of any person striving to make a comparative study.

(Conversion in the sense of a sudden and complete change of front by virtue of a more or less cataclysmic emotional upheaval is a genuine phenomenon which has been experienced by multitudes of people.<sup>2</sup>)

Though highly evaluated by several American evangelical denominations, the experience cannot be regarded as exclusively Christian, or even as exclusively religious, in its nature, for numerous instances are on record of conversions among non-Christian peoples,<sup>3</sup> conversions in which there was no religious content whatever,<sup>4</sup> and

<sup>1</sup> *Varieties of Religious Experience*, pp. 207, 208.

<sup>2</sup> Such cases are so well known that it is not deemed necessary to cite examples or describe them. See James: *Varieties of Religious Experience*, pp. 127-258; Davenport: *Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals*, Chs. VI-X; Edwards: *Narrative of Many Surprising Conversions*, pp. 6-74; Underwood: *Conversion, Christian and Non-Christian*, Part II; Cartwright: *Autobiography*, Chs. IV, V, etc.; and nearly all religious histories and biographies of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For discussions of such conversions see Coe: *Psychology of Religion*, Ch. X; Starbuck: *Psychology of Religion*, Part I; Pratt: *The Religious Consciousness*, Chs. VII, VIII; Ames: *Psychology of Religious Experience*, Ch. XIV; Thouless: *Introduction to the Psychology of Religion*, Ch. XIII; Hall: *Adolescence*, Vol. II, Ch. XIV; Strickland: *Psychology of Religious Experience*, Ch. VI; Hickman: *Introduction to the Psychology of Religion*, Ch. VIII; and almost any volume dealing with the psychology of religion.

<sup>3</sup> See Underwood: *Conversion, Christian and Non-Christian*, Chs. II-VIII; Pratt: *The Religious Consciousness*, pp. 128n, 129-140; James: *Varieties of Religious Experience*, pp. 175-179, 223-226.

<sup>4</sup> James: *Varieties of Religious Experience*, pp. 178, 181.

even of "counter conversions," or sudden turnings from religion to irreligion.<sup>11</sup>

Students have agreed in discerning three distinct steps in conversion. (1) A period of "storm and stress," or sense of sin, or feeling of inward disharmony, known to theology as "conviction of sin" and designated by James as "soul sickness."<sup>12</sup> (2) An emotional crisis which marks a turning point. (3) A succeeding relaxation attended by a sense of peace, rest, inner harmony, acceptance with God, and not infrequently by motor and sensory reflexes of various sorts. Ames defines these steps as being, "first, a sense of perplexity and uneasiness; second, a climax and turning point; third, a relaxation marked by rest and joy."<sup>13</sup> Coe finds the experience to have the following marks: (1) The subject's very self seems to be profoundly changed. (2) This change seems not to be wrought by the subject but upon him. (3) The sphere of the change is the attitudes that constitute one's character or mode of life. (4) The change includes a sense of attaining to a higher life, or to emancipation or enlargement of the self.<sup>14</sup>

### *Contemporary Types of Awakening*

Although various denominations have set a premium upon the radical experience and definitely striven for a converted membership, it was clearly recognized by students that conversion was but one door, and an exceptional one, of entrance to the religious life.<sup>15</sup> It is now coming to be generally recognized that religion dawns

<sup>11</sup> James: *Varieties of Religious Experience*, pp. 176, 177; Pratt: *The Religious Consciousness*, pp. 126-128.

<sup>12</sup> *Varieties of Religious Experience*, Chs. VI and VII.

<sup>13</sup> *Psychology of Religious Experience*, p. 258.

<sup>14</sup> *Psychology of Religion*, p. 153.

<sup>15</sup> Coe: *The Psychology of Religion*, p. 155.

by development and therefore demands antecedent educational processes, the various emotional phenomena being only incidents. Starbuck showed that the conversion and gradual growth cases all arrived at the same final goal, the conclusion being that the emotional disturbances could not have exerted a determining influence.

In analyzing the data of the present study it has seemed wise, as stated, to avoid the use of the term "conversion" as far as possible in order to prevent confusion of thought due to the different meanings of the term. As will be shown later, the trend is definitely in the direction of eliminating the emotional cataclysms and a general smoothing of the whole process of religious awakening. The data indicate clearly the general continuity of religious development and the merely incidental place of emotional upheavals therein. But in the entire range of the process the data indicate three types of awakening, which, indeed, differ mainly in degree and often only in the subject's attitude toward his own experiences. The three types have been called the Definite Crisis, Emotional Stimulus, and Gradual types.)

### I. THE DEFINITE CRISIS AWAKENING

The Definite Crisis type of awakening is, as its designation implies, the type in which a real emotional crisis is reached and passed and in which a definite change of attitude seems to have taken place. In general the type conforms to the conversion experience as above described, since most of the typical marks are usually present. The emotional upheaval is present in varying degrees of intensity and serves quite well to mark off the Definite Crisis type, but the distinguishing feature is that a crisis is actually reached and a change of front effected. Un-

fortunately, the data do not reveal the manner of life lived by the respondents before and after the experience and no conclusions can be drawn as to changes of moral character; the transformation lies in the conscious attitude. The following cases will serve as illustrations of the Definite Crisis type of awakening: <sup>16</sup>

*Case 23.* Age 26 (M). Converted at Clear Creek, an old country church in 1909. I had been thinking that I should have Jesus as my personal Saviour. A saintly old man, Brother Shook, preached one night. His words hammered upon me and seemed to ring in my breast. I felt I must give my life to Christ. I went to the altar where I knelt, weeping. Several talked with me but still I was burdened. My father came and asked me if I did not love Jesus. Of course I did! And instantly my burden rolled away. I was intensely happy. All over the house I went shaking hands with everyone. My immediate aftereffect was to tell someone else about my new love. The few nights following I led three or four of my friends to the altar. I am conscious of that experience today, and it is my Bethel when I need again the joy of the Spirit.

*Case 24.* (F). Converted at beginning of tent meeting, first service, at the age of fourteen years. I had publicly sought religious experience since the age of nine years but had given up hope of the experience. Went to the altar so as not to stand in a friend's way. After questions by Christian workers, was told that my trouble was that I did not believe that this step should be taken at that moment. The worker had me to read my own name in John 3: 16, and immediately a strange peace came in my life. I arose from the altar. The worker asked if I were satisfied and my reply was yes. I had expected to be very emotional about it but it was very quiet. A perfect satisfaction of salvation. At once I began to look forward to religious work, but have been hindered by physical barriers. Still conscious of that experience, I have never had one moment of doubt. I have felt that all was

<sup>16</sup> In these cases the preceding number is the number of the case in the tabulation. M. and F. refer to the sex of the respondent.



right between my Heavenly Father and me. The experience has grown richer as the years have passed.

*Case 43.* Age 28 (M). Converted in January, 1920. I had known for years I was a sinner, if I died in that condition the place of my abode; but the ways of the world called me into the ever existing pleasures it had to offer. I had from childhood intended to become a Christian in later life. When the doctors gave me up to die, when my vision went and came as did my mind, it was then it seemed I was taking a step out in the darkness alone, all, all alone. Under these conditions I called on the God of my parents. I made some pledges to God about this time. First promised not to be guilty of some of the outstanding sins I had been committing; second, to join His Church; third, the first I lived up to but the second I put off for some two years. During the time I tried to live religious without anybody knowing it. I ran into the strongest temptation possible for me to have met. Those temptations were usually along the lines I had promised not to commit. It seemed at times I would be overpowered. I traveled from town to town as a barber. One time I got a new job, the proprietor was religious. I went with him to Church. There I heard these words, "Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." Here I made my confession before men.

*Case 503.* Age 59 (M). Conversion: yes, on Easter Sunday, April, 1883. At Tremont Temple, Boston. I was just 17. I was aware that for several months my parents, pastor and S. S. teacher had been anxious about me, were praying for me, etc. While this made me reflect, it also raised revolt within me and made me resist what I knew in my heart was my duty and would lead to joy. On the evening referred to, I heard a converted actor preach. He told of the emptiness of his old life, and the new peace and power in his life now; and when he called for decisions, I found myself on my feet. I recall that my feelings were surging high, that I had taken a step the consequences of which were incalculable; and I began to feel relieved. My father was called on for public prayer and the note of joy in his voice was very evident. Father

talked with me on the way home, encouragingly; and mother prayed out of a full heart at my bedside. But Monday and Tuesday were so ordinary that I began to wonder if I were "converted." But I went to a Tremont Temple prayer meeting Tuesday evening and took part by telling what I had done on Sunday. Immediately, I felt a joy and an "assurance" hitherto unfelt. I went home elated. The thought that I belonged to Christ forever completely filled my consciousness. On Wednesday, I sought my younger brother and my chum, and won both of them to Christ. The experience was a new starting point in life, a source of new energy and resolution. I went away to college the following fall and aligned myself with the Christian forces. My conversion experience was a "keeping" power; and though I grew cold for a time, it brought me back. After leaving college, I had a "call to the ministry"; and I think my conversion experience has quite largely determined my preaching and my pastoral work. Though I am now a liberal and modernist (if the terms mean what I think they do), yet I still hold that a single, all-inclusive decision is the normal and best way of entering the Christian life. Believing thoroughly in "religious education" in its newest form, I believe that a Christian life of stability and purposefulness is best begun by a "surrender," a conscious acceptance of Jesus as Lord of one's conduct, thinking, ideals, desires and destiny.

It will be seen at once that these are typical conversion cases. Not all of those placed in the Definite Crisis class are so strongly emotional as those cited, but all cases fall in that category when a definite crisis is reached and passed and an actual change of attitude effected.

## II. THE EMOTIONAL STIMULUS AWAKENING

The Emotional Stimulus type of experience is that in which the emotional upheaval is much reduced in intensity, or even entirely absent, and in which no especial change is effected, but the subject looks back to some

event which served as a stimulus to awaken the religious consciousness. To all intents and purposes the cases are those of gradual and unbroken growth, but the emotional stimulus, frequently very slight, gave rise to the conscious religious attitude. More often than otherwise the event was merely going forward in a public meeting, joining the church, undergoing the ritual of confirmation, or rising in a Sunday School "decision day" service. Life and attitude remained unchanged, but the stimulus stands out in memory as the dawn of a definite religious acceptance, and is frequently referred to as a conversion by the respondent himself. The following cases illustrate the type:

*Case 46.* Age 21 (M). Converted at the age of ten in Clark's Chapel Church, Franklin, Mo. A child of ten years as a rule has not a definite conception as to just the meaning of religion and in most cases is influenced by older members or temporary emotions. With a group of fellow playmates I joined the Church. We went as one "individual mind" that was probably induced to go if the rest would follow. In a way there was of course a realization of the fact that my life was to be guided by the Savior, and for a diversion from the teachings there was to be a penalty. Nothing outstanding in remaining influence. In the case of being religious and being a Christian has in my estimation a distinction. A person may accept religion but due to indifference, selfishness or some other attraction he comes in conflict with the actual manifestation of faith which he would be obliged to make if he were a true and devout follower of the religious creeds.

*Case 64.* Age 25 (M). Converted several times at nineteen and twenty-one, at a summer camp and at the home of a friend who was in the ministry. The general feelings were dissatisfaction, sense of failure and futility, worry over choice of a profession. My first experience was in the nature of a formless vision, a sort of great light which came while I was sitting writing letters on the porch of a boathouse. It seemed

perfectly natural, and left me with the impression of the attractiveness of Christ. The second time it was simply a case of surrendering to the challenge of following Christ. The issue was presented to me by S. M. Shoemaker, Jr., now Rector of Calvary Church, New York City. A new sense of the vitality and adventure of the Christian life. The main decision was along the lines of life work. The influence has become dim and has to be reproduced again by new consecrations. This amounts to a daily renewing whenever possible. The initial experiences can never be forgotten and perhaps their chief value is the memory of the possibilities of peace with God. I had touched a reality which remains with me as a goal to be reached daily. Along with these "conversions" there has been a sense of growth all along the line. Remarks: I have had great difficulty in answering this questionnaire. It is hard for a growing mind to analyze the process of growth. I do not believe that the value of this method of collecting religious data is very great. It seems to me that the practical experience gained by a religious worker who had done a lot of work with individuals, would be worth more than these questionnaires.

*Case 232.* Age 18 (F). Converted when seven or eight years of age in revival at Brookland Church. My parents had always taught me to attend preaching. The revival was being held at the church near home. I loved Jesus and felt like I wanted to accept him as my personal Savior. I accepted as my parents had no objections. I felt like that Jesus would be my guide, that He would forgive me of my sins and save me, provided that I would do my part. I felt like I had to stop some things that I had been doing in the past. I tried to do better after I joined the Church, to live by law of the Church and to do as Jesus would have me to do. Influence remaining: If my parents or anyone had objected to me joining the Church at that age, I might not have been a Christian today.

*Case 787.* Age 17 (F). Conversion: yes, about six years ago at Altus, Okla. I was rather young when I underwent this experience so I do not remember any special feeling except the perfect confidence that I was doing what I should. All of my Sunday School Class were converted at the same time.

I really tried to do the things that I had been taught were right. Influence remaining: I have a very high regard for religious doings although I am not such an active member of the Church. I try to ward off wrong temptations and doings.

It seems apparent that these subjects were no better and no more truly religious after these experiences than they had previously been; no real change of attitude occurred. It is probable that these persons underwent many other emotional experiences equally profound, or even more stirring, than those related, but this one spot glows in memory as the starting point of the religious career. The emotional stimulus gave to consciousness the slight push necessary to pivot it over to a definite religious attitude.

### III. THE GRADUAL AWAKENING

In the Gradual category fall all those persons whose religious life has flowed onward like a stream, enlarging and growing but striking no obstructions and forming no cataracts. Like the classic case of Edward Everett Hale, these persons can recall no period when they did not believe themselves to be children of God, and hence no change of attitude was necessary. Examples of this type are too familiar to demand numerous illustrations, but the following are cited:

*Case 249.* Age 17 (F). At the age of thirteen I desired to connect myself with the Church and take of the Holy Communion. Feelings: when I commune at the altar rail I have a feeling that I never experience at any other time. One of awe and reverence, mingled with love and fear. Process: there was nothing spontaneous about the religious realization. I was taught from birth to love Jesus and as I grew older my love and faith just became stronger.

*Case 348.* Age 27 (M). I went through the forms of conversion but without the actual experience. I've been religious

for as long as I can remember. I can remember of praying privately when I was no older than five, although nobody else knew it. My mother taught me a prayer which I usually repeated at mealtime for grace, the words of which were simple and meant something to me. Feelings: I cannot remember of it ever dawning upon me, as it were, that I was religious. In the earliest experiences which I recall, I thought of God, Christ, and Jesus as three different personalities performing the same works and without conflict. Also that they could and did help me in my trials, my tasks and my life generally. I thought of them without bodies and therefore without bodily limitations. Probably my conception was a spiritual one. Name: it is a process of gradual realization and acceptance. Remarks: I do not believe it is possible to give a very adequate understanding of one's religious growth in answer to the above questions, but I have answered them the best I can. At about 14-15 years of age, I went through the forms of conversion common to revival meetings because I thought it a necessary thing to do. I took it seriously but it never meant any felt or conscious change in my life. I heard others tell of how God came to them for the first at a definite time and place, how the light dawned upon them, how happy they were, etc. I did all I knew how to do to make ready for such an experience but it never came. Consequently, I often thought I wasn't a Christian and whenever a call came for the Christians to stand or come to the front, etc., I always hesitated. If I did stand, I felt a sense of guilt and hypocrisy because I knew I never had the definite experience of Christ entering my heart and changing it as others talked. I always rather enjoyed revival meetings but I don't know how much good they did for me spiritually. I keenly disliked the part of the meeting which publicly divided the confessed Christians from the confessed non-Christians. It always caused a conflict in me because regardless of which group I remained in, I always felt that I wanted to be in the other, or that I should be in the other.

*Case 725. Age 23 (M). Conversion: no. Religious Growth: about my 18th year, I began to read Harold Bell*

Wright and Ralph Connor. Have now outgrown them, but they served to point me to an ideal. I found the ideal in Christ and became conscious of a desire to emulate Him. Because the Bible was so prominent in Connor's books, I began to read it. Feelings: there was no definite or distinct feeling other than a quiet happiness in the contemplation of human worth in its relation to God. I found myself desiring and pleased to do the things for which I felt Jesus would give his approbation. There has never been a sustained let-down from this feeling. All things became more beautiful and wonderful—music, literature, men and women, the theater, sex, all things. The experience grew upon me as the dawning sun spreads over the mountain side. There was no remorse, no tears, merely a gladness, a quiet joy. Name: realization of God. I like to think of the individual suddenly coming into tune with the Infinite much as one operating a radio would tune in on a Sonata. Just a strain of music at first—indistinct, then louder and more pronounced and finally becoming more intelligible, meaningful and beautiful. Remarks: I do not claim that all people could come into contact with God in this way. It may not be so, but as for me and persons of my emotional makeup, it was very effective and real. I was an agnostic for a time and more or less fought my way into a faith.

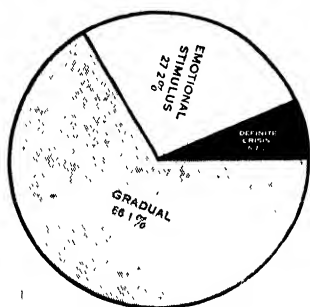
It is to be noted in such cases that deep stirrings of the emotional life are not unknown to those whose awakenings have been gradual, but such experiences found their place in the developing process and are not regarded as determining in their influence. In almost every other respect these experiences follow the same general line of those included in the Emotional Stimulus category.

### *Prevalency of the Respective Types*

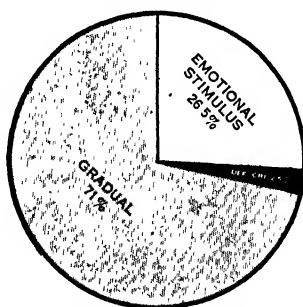
An analysis of the 2174 cases on which this study is based reveals the fact that only 147, or 6.7 per cent, of the whole group, experienced the Definite Crisis awaken-

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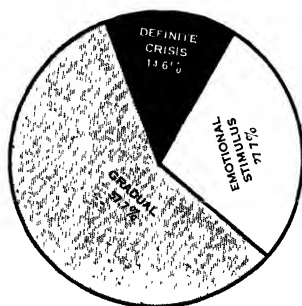
ing; 590, or 27.2 per cent, are in the Emotional Stimulus category; 1437, or 66.1 per cent, experienced no definite awakening whatever but arrived at the religious consciousness by a process of normal and gradual development. The 1420 females classify as follows: Definite Crisis, 2.5 per cent; Emotional Stimulus, 26.5 per cent; Gradual, 71 per cent. The grouping of the 736 males shows 14.6 per cent, Definite Crisis; 27.7 per cent, Emotional Stimulus; and 57.7 per cent, Gradual. These groupings are illustrated by the following charts:



Types of Religious Awakening  
for 2174 males and females



Types of Religious Awakening  
for 1420 females



Types of Religious Awakening  
for 736 males



*The Trend of Religious Experience*

Comparison of the present figures with similar percentages drawn from earlier studies would be of interest in throwing light on the trend in the matter of the type of religious experience, but unfortunately few other statistics are at hand. It has, however, long been known on the basis of common observation that the conversion cases were comparatively few in number. Coe ventured the statement that "even in Christianity conversion experiences are the exception, not the rule,"<sup>17</sup> but offered no data in proof. Starbuck, as has been noted, studied 192 cases of conversion and 232 cases of growth, but these were in separate groups and bore no relationship to each other; Starbuck nowhere presents any facts as to the relative prevalence of the two types of experience.

The categories used herein are not the same as those used in other studies and a direct comparison is therefore not possible. If, however, the Definite Crisis cases are taken to correspond with the conversion cases of Starbuck and others, the data clearly show that many writers on the psychology of religion have magnified the conversion experience beyond its numerical deserts, since more than 93 per cent of the persons who to-day call themselves religious have never undergone any such experience, but became religious through a process of growth, attended in certain cases by the general ferment of adolescence and slight emotional stirrings of a religious nature. Even when all due allowances are made for errors of judgment in analyzing the data and classifying the cases, the general results will remain substantially as stated. And, as will later be seen, when persons above forty years of age and negroes are subtracted and conclu-

<sup>17</sup> *The Psychology of Religion*, p. 155.

sions are drawn from the group of young white persons the percentage of such awakenings shrinks to a still lower figure.

The data seem to indicate that the tendency is definitely away from the Definite Crisis type of awakening and in the direction of a smoothing of experience until it approximates a normal and relatively uneventful process of development. There is of course no reason to believe that the natural ferment of adolescent emotional life will abate or will possess no religious significance, but the facts do seem to indicate that phases of this ferment will not possess the determining influence they once exerted in this realm.

That the tendency mentioned is a fact seems to be clear from several considerations. First, it must again be pointed out that only about 6.7 per cent of the religious persons studied have passed through such an experience. Second, among persons above forty years of age the Definite Crisis cases number 35.8 per cent, as against the 6.7 per cent for the total group, showing that a decrease in such experiences has occurred in recent years. Third, there is a similar disparity between the Definite Crisis experiences of the whole group and those who were poorly trained in religion at home and in Sunday School. This fact will be discussed later, but in the present connection it seems fair to assume that as religious training becomes more and more effective it will result in an increasing reduction of the more radical experiences. Fourth, many experiences on record show unmistakably that they were typed by a theology which insisted upon them. This point must also be reserved for full treatment at a later point, but it can here be said that such insistence will doubtless become less and less

as the facts of psychology are more clearly understood and interpreted by theology, and with the disappearance of typed cases will come a still further smoothing of the course of religious experience.

There may be grave misgivings as to the probable effect of this tendency on the vitality and power of personal religion and all the values for which religion stands. The temptation is strong to enter this realm of discussion, but the data under consideration do not lead there. However important the philosophic and practical aspects of this problem may be, they lie beyond the province of the present study, which can only state the actual facts which appear to be established by the records at hand. That the tendency in question is now present seems to be a fair conclusion.

## CHAPTER III

### THE AGE OF RELIGIOUS AWAKENING

IN a phenomenon of development it is hardly possible to establish a definite date for the completion of the process. It is therefore as difficult to determine exactly when an individual becomes religious as to decide when he became patriotic or altruistic or moral. There are, however, certain marks in the religious person's own experience which may establish *for him* with more or less accuracy when his religious attitude became a realizable fact.

In the case of the Definite Crisis type of awakening, the date of the event itself can be fixed with as much certainty as the date of any other event; it is probable, however, that few persons, even among those who have undergone the experience, would claim that the event itself was either the beginning or ending of the awakening process. In a certain sense it may be said that there is neither beginning nor ending of the developing religious consciousness for the religious man save birth and death. Nothing can therefore be meant by the age of religious experience save the general time when inner harmony was attained, peace or rest took the place of depression or restlessness, and the individual consciously realized the sense of forgiveness, religious confidence, faith in and harmony with God, or any of the other psychological manifestations of religious awakening. In this matter

the individual must be trusted as competent to speak of his own experiences, since there are no other tests. Indeed, there seems to be no reason why his testimony here is not as valid as in any other field.

*Early Studies in the Age of Awakening*

The first fact established by the science of the psychology of religion was that the dawn of the religious consciousness was almost exclusively a phenomenon of adolescence. Dr. G. Stanley Hall, who claimed priority in this discovery, states that he was criticized and ridiculed for it; in lectures delivered in Boston in 1881 and published two years later in the *Princeton Review* under the title of "The Moral and Religious Training of Children and Adolescents," he drew the conclusion from data collected by himself in correspondence, from the records of the Fulton Street (N. Y.) noon prayer meeting, and the analogy between religious experience and normal adolescent changes.<sup>1</sup> Many similar studies were at once made, so that by the time Hall published his *Adolescence* in 1904 he was able to cite the reports of about twenty-five men who had made observations on the subject, all of which bore out the conclusions he had previously published.<sup>2</sup>

Brockman<sup>3</sup> found the most frequent age of conversion to be seventeen. In the records of Drew Theological Seminary<sup>4</sup> it was sixteen, with the number converted at seventeen being almost as great. Gulick<sup>5</sup> found 60 cases at

<sup>1</sup> *Adolescence*, Vol. II, p. 292.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 288-292.

<sup>3</sup> "A Study of Moral and Religious Life of 251 Preparatory School Students in the United States," *Ped. Sem.*, Sept., 1902, pp. 255-273.

<sup>4</sup> Compiled by Librarian Louis N. Wilson for Hall: *Adolescence*, Vol. II, p. 290.

<sup>5</sup> "Sex and Religion," *Association Outlook*, Dec., 1897, p. 54.

eighteen and 59 at sixteen, these being the ages of greatest frequency in a total of 526 cases. Ayres<sup>6</sup> found the modal age to be eighteen, with seventeen only two cases smaller. Coe's<sup>7</sup> average of 1784 men was 16.4 years, and this author reported the modal age for a second religious awakening to be twenty. All of the above-mentioned cases were men. In a study of both men and women, Pope<sup>8</sup> found the modal age for conversion to be fifteen, with the group at seventeen containing the same number of cases less one. The modal ages in all of these studies were fifteen, sixteen, and eighteen except in that of Hammond, who specialized in revival work among children, and in the cases of Starbuck's girls.<sup>9</sup>

The tabulation on page 55 shows the status of the age of religious awakening at the beginning of the century as determined by four representative studies.<sup>10</sup>

The totals of these studies show the modal year for the typical religious awakening to be the sixteenth; the median is the seventeenth and the average the sixteenth.<sup>11</sup>

### *The Work of Starbuck*

The data previously cited from the work of Starbuck

<sup>6</sup> Compiled from Methodist Minutes for Hall: *Adolescence*, Vol. II, p. 290.

<sup>7</sup> *The Spiritual Life*, pp. 41-46.

<sup>8</sup> Hall: *Adolescence*, Vol. II, p. 290.

<sup>9</sup> "A Study of Conversion," *Am. Jour. Psy.*, Jan., 1897, pp. 268-308.

<sup>10</sup> The unrepresentative child studies of Hammond, the undetailed data of Brockman, the early figures of Starbuck, and the studies of Coe, most of whose cases were taken from the work of the other men herein cited, are excluded. However, they are of the same general tenor. All the cases above tabulated are males save those of Pope, which are males and females.

<sup>11</sup> Accurately calculated the median is nearly eighteen and the average nearly seventeen, actually sixteen years and nine months.

AGE	DREW	GULICK	AYRES	POPE	TOTAL
6	4	..	2	1	7
7	6	..	9	1	16
8	6	9	15	1	31
9	14	4	30	3	51
10	19	9	60	5	93
11	34	12	51	9	106
12	53	37	96	4	190
13	43	32	103	11	194
14	62	52	161	17	292
15	56	46	214	30	346
16	93	59	289	25	466
17	89	47	298	29	463
18	71	60	300	17	448
19	57	48	265	17	387
20	49	47	222	10	328
21	39	34	172	8	253
22	23	15	99	9	146
23	16	11	103	11	141
24	8	4	55	10	77
25	6	..	53	1	60
26	6	..	27	3	36
27	1	..	26	3	30
28	1	..	17	3	21
TOTAL	756	526	2672	228	4182

Number of awakenings in each year as shown by four studies

was from his first study, published in 1897,<sup>12</sup> wherein he found the modal age for the conversion of males to be fifteen; in the case of females the same number of cases fell in the years twelve and thirteen, with only one less in the sixteenth, these being the largest groups. His work was expanded, with a much larger universe of data, in his *The Psychology of Religion* in 1899. This showed the modal age of conversion for both males and females to be sixteen, with a sharp rise in the curve for females at thirteen. The data included cases from various sources: the author's first study, W. C. T. U., Methodists, other Churches, American soldiers, Drew Theological Seminary,

<sup>12</sup> "A Study of Conversion," *Am. Jour. Psy.*, Jan., 1897, p. 272.

revival cases, and non-revival cases.<sup>13</sup> The total number of cases was 235 males and 254 females and the results were as follows:

AGE	MALES	FEMALES
9	15	5
10	27	7
11	38	20
12	64	26
13	56	31
14	85	25
15	89	17
16	121	34
17	114	15
18	45	21
19	77	10
20	58	11
21	47	6
22	31	3
23	23	1
24	11	4
25	12	5

Number of conversions in each year as shown by Starbuck's conversion cases

On the basis of all the data of his conversion cases, Starbuck formulated the following law: "Among the females there are two tidal waves of religious awakening at about thirteen and sixteen, followed by a less significant period at eighteen; while among the males the great wave is at about sixteen, preceded by a wavelet at twelve, and followed by a surging up at eighteen or nineteen."<sup>14</sup>

Starbuck did not confine himself to conversion cases; he also made an independent study of growth cases not involving conversion. In this group the fixing of definite ages is, of course, much more difficult, but by studying the cases of "spontaneous awakening," including joining

<sup>13</sup> For a table showing details for each of these groups see Starbuck: *The Psychology of Religion*, p. 33.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.



the Church when this was recalled as a vital step, which occurred within the gradual growth process, Starbuck found the age of such experiences in the cases of 88 females and 50 males. These "spontaneous awakenings" coincide in a general way with the Emotional Stimulus cases of the present study. The modal age for both males and females was found to be fifteen. The percentage of cases for each year may be seen from the following table: <sup>15</sup>

AGE	MALES	FEMALES
7	0	1
8	0	1
9	2	2
10	2	13
11	6	10
12	6	13
13	0	9
14	4	8
15	22	16
16	16	11
17	8	4
18	8	6
19	8	0
20	6	5
21	8	0
22	2	1
23	2	0

Percentage of "spontaneous awakenings" in each year  
as shown in Starbuck's growth cases

Starbuck found the average age of spontaneous awakenings to be 16.3 years for males and 13.7 for females, and the average age of conversion 16.4 for males and 14.8 for females; the correspondence in age of the two types of experiences is almost exact for males and close for females. <sup>16</sup>

Having before him data for both cataclysmic and the

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 202.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 204.

developmental types of religious awakening, Starbuck plotted a composite curve of the whole. This curve reached its peak for both males and females at fifteen years and six months, with a sharp rise for females and a slight rise for males at twelve, and another rise, temporarily arresting a sharp descent, at eighteen for females and nineteen for males.<sup>17</sup> With his whole data showing the modal age of religious awakening to be midway between fifteen and sixteen and all other contemporary studies showing it to be sixteen, it may be concluded with some certainty that the typical religious experience of thirty years ago occurred in the subject's sixteenth year.

#### *Comparison of Definite Crisis Data*

The questions now to be considered are whether any change in this chronology has taken place since that time, what are the probable causes of any changes observable, and what may reasonably be expected in the future. The data being considered herein seem to throw some light upon these questions, since the dates of awakening are available in a universe of cases sufficiently large to be fairly representative. The age can be determined in 1207 records, of which number 431 are males and 776 females. Of this total, 104 males and 31 females are in the Definite Crisis group, corresponding generally to Starbuck's conversion cases; while 327 males and 745 females are Emotional Stimulus and Gradual cases, similar to those included in Starbuck's spontaneous awakening, deepened interest, and growth categories.

When the Definite Crisis cases are segregated results are obtained as shown in the table on page 59.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 205.

<sup>18</sup> A few scattered cases between 27 and 35 are omitted.

AGE	MALES	FEMALES	BOTH
9	2	0	2
10	5	4	9
11	2	1	3
12	10	7	17
13	5	3	8
14	7	6	13
15	6	1	7
16	9	3	12
17	13	2	15
18	14	0	14
19	3	0	3
20	9	1	10
21	3	1	4
22	1	0	1
23	4	0	4
24	1	0	1
25	2	2	4
26	3	0	3
27	1	0	1

Number of Definite Crisis awakenings in each year  
for the whole group

In the case of the females these returns practically coincide with the previous studies. The totals of Starbuck's female cases showed the modal age to be sixteen, but the twelve group was practically as large and was actually larger in his first study and his group of Methodist girls. In the above returns four of the twelve-year-old cases and one each of the fourteen- and sixteen-year-old cases are of persons above forty years of age and therefore belong to the period covered by the previous studies rather than the present in such a comparison as is here attempted. If these are subtracted, in an attempt to group young people only, the modal age is no longer twelve but fourteen, which is a still closer correspondence with the conclusions of Starbuck and others.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>19</sup> It is felt, however, that the small size of the female group, only 25 persons under forty years of age, renders reliance upon conclusions drawn therefrom somewhat precarious.

In the case of the males the face of the returns shows that the age is older than was true of the previous study, which found the modal age to be about sixteen while the present data point to seventeen and eighteen. In the present statistics two in the twelve-year-old group, three in the seventeen, and four in the eighteen are male persons above forty. If these are subtracted the mode is still seventeen and eighteen, but the peak of the curve at these ages goes only one point above sixteen and the difference is not so marked as to warrant any conclusion departing radically from previous opinion. That the data for young people may stand alone, however, the following table is inserted to show the results after all cases above forty years of age have been eliminated:

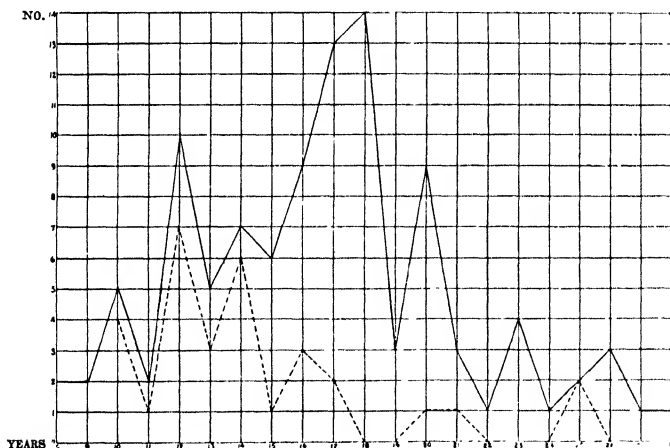
AGE	MALES	FEMALES	BOTH
9	1	0	1
10	4	4	8
11	2	1	3
12	8	3	11
13	5	3	8
14	7	5	12
15	5	1	6
16	9	2	11
17	10	2	12
18	10	0	10
19	2	0	2
20	6	1	7
21	3	1	4
22	1	0	1
23	4	0	4
24	1	0	1
25	2	2	4
26	2	0	2
27	1	0	1

Number of Definite Crisis awakenings in each year  
among persons under forty years of age

The conclusion indicated by a comparison of the Definite Crisis cases of the present study with the conversion

cases of thirty years ago is that the age of the experience has varied little. A strict interpretation shows that the age has been raised somewhat for males and lowered for females, but considerations previously mentioned warn against demanding mathematical accuracy at this point.

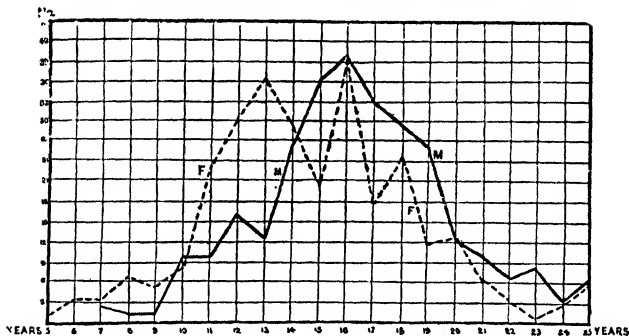
When the Definite Crisis cases are plotted in the form of a curve, it shows a rise at ten, a sharper rise at twelve, modal peaks at seventeen and eighteen, and another rise, temporarily arresting a sharp drop, at twenty. Such a curve follows, and for purposes of comparison Starbuck's curve for his conversion cases is likewise inserted. In the curve illustrating the present data the cases above forty are included and a more nearly correct interpretation will be obtained by considering the facts above mentioned with reference to these cases.



Curves showing frequency of Definite Crisis awakenings in different years

———— 104 Males

..... Females



Starbuck's curves showing the frequency of conversions in different years  
 ————— 235 Males  
 ..... 254 Females

### *Comparison of All Contemporary Data*

When the present data as a whole, irrespective of types, are considered, the evidence quite plainly indicates that the age of religious awakening has been lowered at least three and a half years.<sup>30</sup> The modal age is twelve and the average is about twelve years and eight months. This is true in every arrangement and classification of the data, with the single exception of the Definite Crisis males as above mentioned; it is true of the total, Emotional Stimulus, Gradual, Male, and Female groups, as

<sup>30</sup> This coincides generally with the results of an elaborate investigation of religious education in the State of Indiana, made under the direction of Dr. Walter S. Athern and published as *The Indiana Survey of Religious Education*. Vol. I, pp. 371-378, presents the data on the age at which Sunday School teachers joined the Church. For 1693 teachers the median age was 17.2 for males and 14.4 for females; the modal ages were 12, 13, and 14. A wider study of 6194 persons in 43 states showed the median at 14.6 and the mode in the 13th year. These persons were older than those being studied herein; the median age of the Indiana teachers was 35.1 for females and 42.1 for males, the typical teacher being 37. It is an interesting confirmation of the conclusions drawn from the present data that the Indiana group were about midway in time between Starbuck's subject and those herein studied, and the age was correspondingly lowered.

well as of the stern theology, irregular Sunday School and poor home training groups, which will be defined and discussed later.<sup>21</sup>

The frequencies for each year in various groups are seen in the following table:

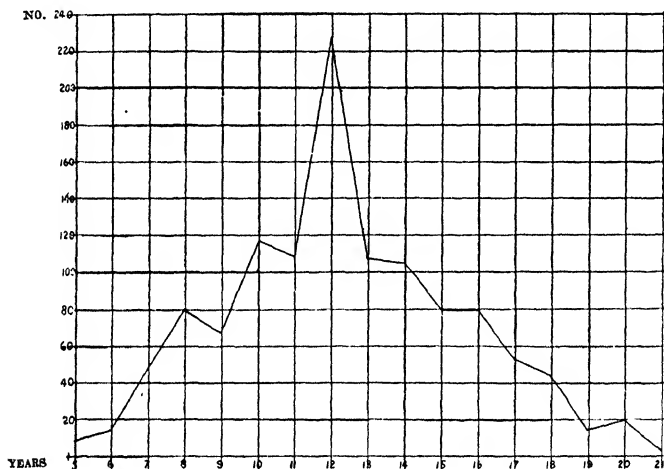
AGE	TOTALS	MALES	FEMALES	GRADUAL & EMO. STIM.	STERN THEO.	IRREG. S. S.	POOR HOME TRAINING
6	14	4	10	14	0	0	2
7	50	12	38	50	0	2	2
8	80	22	58	78	9	1	10
9	67	16	51	65	4	0	4
10	116	29	87	107	12	4	6
11	108	21	87	105	9	5	10
12	117	76	151	113	25	10	20
12	107	29	78	99	12	5	10
14	105	43	62	92	12	5	12
12	81	31	50	74	11	7	14
16	81	36	45	69	17	9	12
17	54	34	20	39	13	11	13
18	46	30	16	32	5	8	11
19	16	10	6	13	2	2	2
20	19	12	7	9	2	7	6
21	4	3	1	0	0	0	0
22	4	4	0	3	1	1	2
23	6	4	2	2	3	3	3

Number of religious awakenings in each year for total of 1207 persons and for other specified groups

A comparison of these statistics with those above cited from older sources shows that here awakenings are centered between ten and fourteen, by far the larger number coming at twelve, whereas the earlier researches showed them concentrated between fourteen and twenty, the

<sup>21</sup> The stern theology group consists of those who were taught the sterner theological doctrines, like total depravity, damnation, hell-fire, etc. The irregular Sunday School group, as its name implies, is composed of those who did not attend Sunday School regularly in childhood. The poor home training group refers to those who received little or no home training in religion during childhood. These groups are discussed later.

sixteenth and seventeenth years being modal. The totals of the present study, plotted in the form of a curve, show the following results:



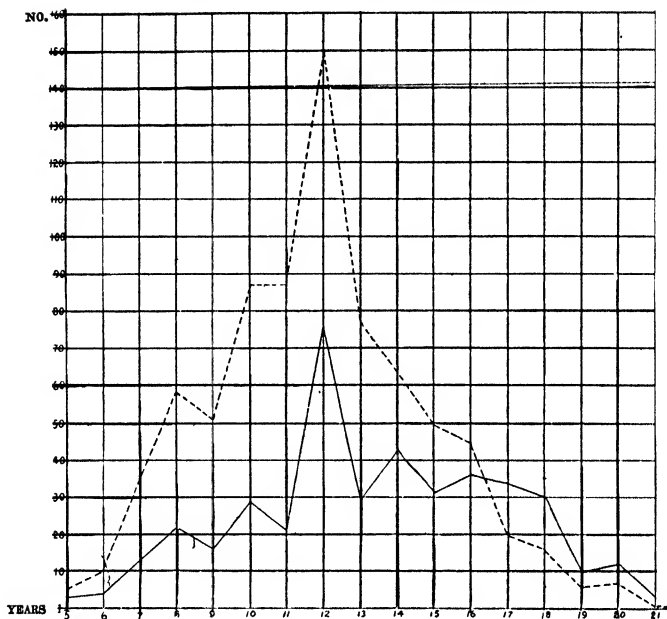
Curve showing frequency of religious awakening in different years for total of 1207 cases, male and female

When the males and females are separated into different groups and both plotted on a curve the results obtained are as indicated in graph on page 65.

Since the elimination of the Definite Crisis cases would create no great difference in the general appearance of the above curves, but would only make the descent more rapid in the case of males, no curve is plotted for the Emotional Stimulus and Gradual cases separately. For purposes of comparison, however, Starbuck's curve of growth cases is inserted on page 66.

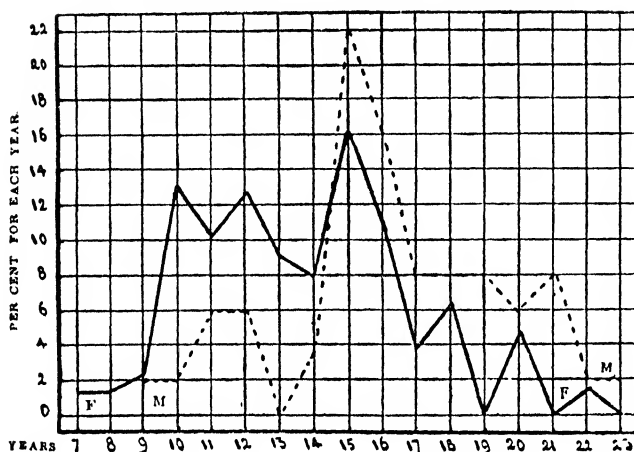
Repeating the conclusions that seem to be warranted from this comparison it may be said that the more radical





Curves showing frequency of religious awakening in different years  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 431 Males                      ..... 776 Females

form of religious awakening occurs at about the same age as formerly, namely, around seventeen. But when religion dawns by a more gradual process the awakening comes three and a half years earlier than formerly, at twelve to-day as against fifteen and a half thirty years ago. The process seems to complete itself at twelve if no obstructions are encountered and the unfolding is allowed to proceed normally. But if the process is interrupted, the religious demands resisted, or impediments presented which prevent the assumption of the religious attitude at this time, then the experience is deferred for



Curves showing distribution according to years of spontaneous awakening, deepened interest, etc., in Starbuck's growth cases

————— Female

..... Male

nearly five years and requires an emotional disturbance to overcome the obstructions, which have grown more formidable with the lapse of time. The problem for religious education seems to consist in so guiding persons at the beginning of adolescence that the impediments to the religious life may be avoided and the religious attitude early assumed, thereby preventing the spiritual dangers of a later upheaval or the possibility that the crystallized irreligious attitudes and habits may never be changed.

Discussion of the probable causes of the reduction in the age of religious awakening must be deferred to a later chapter, but it is here in order to say a word concerning the possible relation of the dawning of religion and the biological fact of puberty. This is an old and rich field of speculation, which has been burned over

many, many times."<sup>22</sup> Anthropology has shown that among all peoples the rites and ceremonies of religion have been connected with the pubic phenomenon,<sup>23</sup> and that the religious initiation rites of savages, as the modern rites of confirmation, took place on the maturing of the sexual life. It is a fact of common observation that religion, even in its highest and purest forms, dawns in the individual coincidently with puberty and in its development revolves around the conceptions of love, fatherhood, the family, and other ideas suggestive of the sexual relation. The storm and stress, conviction of sin, and general disturbance of the emotional life attending religious awakening is a part of the general adolescent ferment which accompanies the biological changes of puberty.

All this can be said, but on the basis of ascertained data no more can be said. No causal relation has as yet been established between the physical facts of puberty and the phenomena of conversion. The present study provides no direct data on the subject. Starbuck's respondents reported on the chronological relation between puberty and conversion, and Starbuck drew the conclusion that "conversion and puberty tend to supplement each other in time, rather than coincide."<sup>24</sup> In general

<sup>22</sup> See Hall, *Adolescence*, Vol. II, pp. 292-301; Ames, *The Psychology of Religious Experience*, Ch. XII; Coe, *The Psychology of Religion*, pp. 92-95, 163-165; Thouless, *An Introduction to the Psychology of Religion*, Ch. X; Westermarck, *The History of Human Marriage*, Ch. VI; Hartland, art., "Phallism," in Hastings' *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. IX; Westermarck, *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*, is a mine of facts; see Index.

<sup>23</sup> See Hall, *Adolescence*, Vol. II, Ch. XIII; Hamilton-Grierson, art., "Puberty," in Hastings' *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Vol. X; Westermarck: *The History of Human Marriage*.

<sup>24</sup> *The Psychology of Religion*, pp. 38-44.

his statistics showed that in the case of males nearly twice as many conversions occurred before puberty, and four times as many after, as during the same year, while the proportions in the case of females was more than three times as many before and six times as many after. Aside from the analogy of these cases and general observation no causal relationship has ever been shown.

A slight suggestion that such dependence is not absolute nor so great as many have been led to believe may be drawn from the fact that the present data have shown that the age of religious awakening is variable and has actually shifted three and a half years in less than one generation, standing now at the very beginning of adolescence. There has certainly been no corresponding shift in the biological fact of puberty. Whatever may be the cause of this change, it assuredly was not sexual. If, therefore, influences other than the birth of the sexual capacity can so markedly affect the chronology of religious experience it seems reasonable to believe that such influences may sustain an equally important causal relation.

## CHAPTER IV

### THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS AWAKENING

PROFESSOR JAMES BISSETT PRATT has raised the problem of the part which may be played by theology in determining types of religious experience. "I believe," he has said, "conversion of the violent type is by no means so common or so normal an experience as most treatises on the psychology of conversion would lead one to suppose." "The violence of the experience is in part induced by the suggestions of a conventional theology and in part purely imaginative, existing in expression rather than experience"—a fact which, if it be a fact, is extremely significant and itself deserves explanation. "I venture to assert," continues Pratt, "that at least nine out of every ten 'conversion cases' reported in recent questionnaires would have had no violent or depressing experience to report had not the individuals in question been brought up in a church or a community which taught them to look for it if not to cultivate it." "The truth is that theologians and certain writers on the psychology of religion have coöperated unknowingly to form a vicious circle which it is difficult to avoid. The theologians by their teachings have induced a largely artificial form of experience; and the psychologists, coming after, have studied the experience thus induced and formulated its laws, thus making Science verify Theology."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Religious Consciousness*, pp. 153, 154.

Pratt offered no proof of his assertion, but the problem thus raised is of such importance for the psychology of religion and religious education in general that it warrants further inquiry. Is it true that the type of theology presented to individuals tends to determine the type of religious experience? Does a change in theological interpretation find reflection in a corresponding change in the religious consciousness? What tendencies are discoverable in this field? Such questions are involved and it seems possible to throw some light upon them. The method of study will be to sketch such phases of the older theology as seem likely to influence experience, then to study a few older types of experience in an attempt to discover whether any influence was exerted thereon by such theology, then to study the recent changes in theological interpretations and the present attitude toward the phases mentioned, and finally by an analysis of the empirical data at hand to endeavor to determine whether corresponding changes have occurred in types of religious awakening.

### *Original Nature in the Older Theology*

The doctrine most intimately related to types of religious experience is the conception of original nature, which theology set forth in the dogma of natural depravity.<sup>2</sup> This dogma held that as a consequence of the primal sin of the first man all human beings inherit sin and the guilt thereof, coming into the world with natures so depraved that nothing good can be done or even willed. This natural sin not only involved guilt but caused the

<sup>2</sup> Formulated by Augustine (354-430 A.D.), this dogma has a long and complicated history. See Augustine: *On Original Sin*. For the history see Schaff: *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. III, pp. 781-870; Shedd: *History of Christian Doctrine*, Bk. IV.

damnation of all persons, even infants dying in the natural or unregenerate state.<sup>3</sup> Even before birth the human being is depraved and merits condemnation,<sup>4</sup> and even after regeneration the individual transmits to his offspring not his regenerate nature but his original depravity.<sup>5</sup>

The only escape from the consequences of natural depravity lies in regeneration, a process by which the elements of original nature are uprooted and transformed. Among churches teaching baptismal regeneration this could be affected by baptism. The Calvinistic bodies taught that regeneration occurred and salvation was secured by the arbitrary elective decree of a sovereign God, who chose whom he pleased for salvation and left all the others to damnation.<sup>6</sup> Arminian bodies and those rejecting baptismal regeneration and election relied upon salvation by faith, stressing personal experience and conversion.

In the traditional theology the dogma of original sin was not a theoretical abstraction but a vital doctrine. It was written into the creeds of all the Churches.<sup>7</sup> It was

<sup>3</sup> Augustine said that "it is not right to assert that those who depart from the body, even little children, escape from damnation." Augustine's Epistle to Jerome, *Epist.* III, LXV, c. iv., 9. That the Westminster divines, formulators of the Calvinistic theological symbols, believed in the damnation of infants for original sin is shown by Briggs: *Whither?*, pp. 121-140.

<sup>4</sup> "Whatsoever was not even yet born is justly condemned in its sinful root." Augustine: *On Original Sin*, p. 43.

<sup>5</sup> "The fault of our nature remains in our offspring so deeply impressed as to make it guilty, even when the guilt of the self-same fault has been washed away in the parent by the remission of sin." *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>6</sup> Westminster Confession, III, IV.

<sup>7</sup> For the texts of all the creeds see Schaff: *Creeds of Christendom*. In America the most important evangelical creeds are the Westminster Confession of Presbyterianism and the Twenty-five Articles of Methodism. In the former see Chapter VI; in the latter see Article VII.

taught by the theologians to the clergy.<sup>9</sup> Preachers taught it to the people through sermons and catechisms.<sup>9</sup> It was made the basis of lurid evangelistic appeals.<sup>10</sup> It was inculcated at the fireside.<sup>11</sup> It was sung in the hymns.<sup>12</sup> Even the public schools coöperated, and the young student of the famous *New England Primer* began "learning his letters" with the couplet

In Adam's fall  
We sinned all.

### *Bearings on Religious Experience*

It seems obvious that the dogma of natural depravity in its unrelieved form had a direct bearing on religious experience. It precluded the gradual unfolding of re-

<sup>9</sup> See the leading textbooks of the recent past: Hodge: *Systematic Theology* (Calvinistic); Miley: *Systematic Theology* (Arminian).

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, the *Sermons* of Jonathan Edwards and his *Treatise on Original Sin*; *Larger Catechism*, questions 20-29; *Shorter Catechism*, questions 13-19.

<sup>10</sup> See Edwards' sermon on "A Sinner in the Hands of an Angry God."

<sup>11</sup> The diary of Cotton Mather describes how he impressed the doctrine upon his four-year-old daughter, Katy. In a tract for children called *Persuasives to Early Piety* (1831) it was thus stressed: "The Sinfulness of your nature, my young friend, is not partial, it is not confined to some of your powers or faculties; but, like a mortal poison, spreads through and pollutes the whole. . . . So far are our best actions, in our natural state, from helping us, that even they are polluted and loathsome." (Quoted by Coe: *Education in Religion and Morals*, p. 52.)

<sup>12</sup> Lord, we are vile, conceived in sin,  
And born unholy and unclean;  
Sprung from the man whose guilty fall  
Corrupts his race, and taints us all.

Soon as we draw our infant breath  
The seeds of sin grow up for death;  
The law demands a perfect heart,  
But we're defiled in every part.

Watts, in *Methodist Hymnal*, 1849, 1878.



religious capacities by denying that any such capacities existed; if every element of original nature is corrupt, development means only an evolution of corruption. Religious education could instruct in Biblical information and doctrinal tenets, but it could not guide the growing life into the religious attitude by an educational process. As a necessary preliminary to any growth in grace there must be an inward change so radical as to uproot and transform every native instinct and capacity.

Thus the ground was laid in theory for the cultivation and high evaluation of the emotional cataclysms which have figured so prominently in religious history. They might be escaped in the theory of those Churches teaching baptismal regeneration, but they became necessary or highly desirable in all the others. These others are the so-called evangelical denominations, which have striven definitely for converted memberships and which developed the revival as the agency for securing conversions.<sup>18</sup>

### *Influence of Theology on Experience*

The theological dogma of natural depravity, involving individual guilt and damnation for original sin, tended to produce and did actually produce religious awakenings of the radical type while discouraging and preventing the more gradual experiences. This thesis will later be supported by contemporary empirical data. Here

<sup>18</sup> For a discussion of the psychology of the revival see Pratt: *The Religious Consciousness*, Ch. X. For a discussion of the part played by the revival in American religious history, see Mode: *The Frontier Spirit in American Christianity*, Ch. II. See also Davenport: *Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals*; Cartwright: *Autobiography*; Rowe: *The History of Religion in the United States*, pp. 60-66.

will be presented in proof but one fact, which is deemed sufficiently important and striking to establish the general fact of the tendency mentioned.

That fact is that in the typical radical experience of the past the peculiar and painful experience of conviction for sin was present regardless of whether the subject was guilty of serious actual sins, a fact which is explicable only on the theory that original sin itself involves guilt. Study shows that many of the persons who suffered most from conviction had committed sins no more heinous than frailties frequently exhibited by religious persons after conversion and for which no unusual remorse was felt. They were convicted not for definite sins but for an indefinite and general idea of sin in the abstract—not for their own but for Adam's disobedience. It seems that this could be true only when the idea of guilt for abstract sin had been fixed in the mind.

Examples of conviction of sin in the abstract are numerous. John Bunyan in conviction suffered for months the tortures of the damned,<sup>14</sup> yet he mentions only four sins of which he was guilty, namely, dancing on the green, playing tipcat, reading the history of Sir Bevis of Southampton, and ringing the church bells or looking on while other lads pulled the ropes. He had used profane language but was cured by one reproof; he was never drunk, nor guilty of licentiousness, and though he accused himself of horrible villainy in general terms he was quick to enter a denial when his enemies charged him with specific sins. "It is quite certain," wrote Lord Macaulay, "that Bunyan was, at eighteen, what, in any but the most austere puritanical circles, would have been considered as a young man of singular gravity and

<sup>14</sup> See his *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*.

innocence.”<sup>15</sup> Even Bunyan declares that before his conviction set in he had given up his pranks and “thought no man in England could please God better.” Then he suddenly became convicted by hearing some poor women discoursing on their “miserable state by nature” and the necessity of a new birth.

The same is true of Jonathan Edwards. No biographer has found faults in him involving any considerable degree of moral turpitude. He was a religious youth, a student of divinity at Yale, a licensed preacher, a pastor in New York, author of an exalted set of sixty-seven rules of conduct by which he governed himself, successor of his famous grandfather in the Northampton pulpit. Yet he became convicted of sin and felt he should have “by far the lowest place in hell.”<sup>16</sup> But in all the record Edwards never mentions any specific sin of which he was guilty.

Edwards declared that the beginning of the great Northampton Awakening was due to a theological cause—the fear that Arminianism might penetrate the community.<sup>17</sup> He insisted on conversion regardless of sinfulness and magnified normal adolescent jollity into mortal sins.<sup>18</sup> He was particularly surprised at the conversion of one young woman because she “had been one of the worst company keepers in the whole town.”<sup>19</sup> He cites two cases of conversion to show “the nature and manner of the operations of God’s spirit.” One was Abigail Hutchinson, an invalid “of a sober and inoffensive con-

<sup>15</sup> Art., “Bunyan,” in *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

<sup>16</sup> See *Memoirs* of the late Reverend Jonathan Edwards, A. M., in Vol. I of his *Works* and his own account of his conversion in his *Narrative of Many Surprising Conversions*.

<sup>17</sup> *Narrative*, pp. 367, 368.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 8.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

versation" who became convicted, quite frankly, of Adam's sin: "Her sense of exceeding sinfulness increased, and she gave an account of it, that it had been an opinion, which, till now she had entertained, that she was not guilty of Adam's sin . . . but that now she saw that she was guilty of that sin, and all over defiled by it."<sup>20</sup> The other case was that of Phebe Bartlet, who at the tender age of four years became profoundly convicted of sin.<sup>21</sup>

These examples are typical of a large number which might be cited from the voluminous literature on the subject.<sup>22</sup>

### *Experience in Non-Christian Conversions*

The influence of the traditional theory of natural depravity in inducing the conviction of sin phenomenon is the more apparent when it is remembered that this phenomenon is absent in conversions among people who have never been taught the theory. A study of non-Christian and non-religious conversions shows that while the preliminary state of depression is present it does not involve the feeling of guilt on account of an abstract idea of sin.

The Bengalee saint and mystic, Ramakrishna, suffered an intense storm and stress for twelve years following his sight of the Mother Goddess at Kali, but in his experience there was nothing corresponding to the conven-

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 57-59.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 66-68.

<sup>22</sup> See the cases of David Brainerd, in Edwards: *Life of Rev. David Brainerd*, pp. 9-17, who was "sensible of the necessity of conviction" and deliberately cultivated it; Cotton Mather, in Wendell: *Cotton Mather*, pp. 33-35, 50; Bishop Marvin, in McAnally: *Life and Labors of Bishop Marvin*, pp. 35, 45; Finney: *Life and Labors of Bishop Marvin*, pp. 71-76; David Morton, in Hoss: *David Morton*, pp. 14-27.

tional conviction of sin. Indeed, he strongly expostulated in after years against centering the attention upon sin. "Some one gave me a book of the Christians," he wrote. "In it there was only one theme—sin and sin, from beginning to end. The fool who repeats again and again, 'I am bound, I am bound,' remains in bondage. He who repeats day and night, 'I am a sinner, I am a sinner,' becomes a sinner indeed."

The case of Maharshi Devendranath Tagore, mystic and father of the poet, Rabindranath Tagore, is similar. He was in deep despair for years previous to his conversion, but it seemed never to occur to him that he was guilty. Both Ramakrishna and Tagore had never been guilty of unusual moral faults, their theology did not contain the idea of original sin, and conviction did not enter into their conversion experiences.<sup>23</sup>

The same fact appears in the case of M. Alphonse Ratisbonne, a skeptical Jew who underwent a remarkable and violent conversion in the Church of San Andrea delle Fratte at Rome in 1842.<sup>24</sup> There was nothing in his previous experience that even suggests conviction of sin and there is no reason to believe that he felt himself guilty. But after he had become an orthodox Catholic he looked back upon his experience and saw it in the light of the dogma of original sin which he had learned. James cites a young man suddenly converted from wasteful profligacy to grinding parsimony, another who instantly "fell out of love" with a girl he had previously adored, and another who in a moment rid himself of

<sup>23</sup> For a description of these cases see Pratt: *The Religious Consciousness*, pp. 129-140, and the authorities there cited. See also Underwood: *Conversion, Christian and Non-Christian*.

<sup>24</sup> The case is described by James: *Varieties of Religious Experience*, pp. 223-226.

anger and worry, his besetting faults.<sup>25</sup> In such non-religious conversions the whole period of storm and stress is absent or greatly reduced and nothing parallel to conviction anywhere appears. A study of "counter conversions" reveals the same situation.<sup>26</sup>

It thus appears that there is nothing in the psychological phenomenon of conversion itself, not even when the conversion is distinctly religious, to demand conviction for sin or the sense of guilt and condemnation. Since these elements are present among persons familiar with the traditional theology and absent among persons unfamiliar therewith, the evidence points to the thesis previously stated, namely, that such theology tends to produce the experiences.

### *Changed Conceptions of Original Nature*

The visitor among the evangelical Churches and the reader of current religious literature will perceive that there has been a change in theology as interpreted to the people, for one will not be likely to hear discussions or read treatises stressing natural depravity, the inheritance of Adam's sin, or the guilt of original sin.<sup>27</sup> While few revisions have been made in credal statements, the doctrine of original sin is to-day interpreted by the leading evangelical denominations in such a way as to permit the development of religion from the capacities of

<sup>25</sup> *Varieties of Religious Experience*, pp. 178-181.

<sup>26</sup> See the cases of the French philosopher Jouffroy, the Italian priest Roberto Ardigo, and others cited by James: *Varieties of Religious Experience*, pp. 176, 177, and Pratt: *The Religious Consciousness*, pp. 126-128.

<sup>27</sup> *The Michigan Christian Advocate*, popular Methodist paper, asserts that "the doctrine of total depravity is dead and buried and only in the far corners do we catch a scent of the old corpse." March 15, 1928, p. 1.

original nature by an educational process, and in these denominations there is strong insistence upon religious education.<sup>28</sup>

Arminianism prepared the ground for such an interpretation.<sup>29</sup> Arminius and his exponent Episcopius in phraseology kept close to the Augustinian position but in meaning departed widely from it. Arminianism held that original sin was only a bias and could be called sin only by a misuse of the word,<sup>30</sup> denied that Adam's sin was imputed to his posterity,<sup>31</sup> and insisted that original sin was not actual sin.<sup>32</sup>

The great Arminian contribution, however, was the doctrine of Prevenient Grace: "The Holy Spirit confers, or at least is ready to confer, upon all and each to whom the word of faith is ordinarily preached, as much grace as is necessary for generating faith and carrying forward their conversion in its successive stages. Thus sufficient grace for faith and conversion is allotted not only to those who actually believe and are converted, *but also to those who do not actually believe, and are not in fact converted.*"<sup>33</sup> The doctrine of Prevenient Grace opened the way for spiritual development by making available to every person born, immediately and certainly, enough divine grace to stimulate the will and thus bring about a coöperation between the human and divine in counter-acting whatever evil tendencies there may be in original

<sup>28</sup> Coe cites the statements of leaders of the various denominations to that effect: *Education in Religion and Morals*, pp. 64-69.

<sup>29</sup> There had, however, always been opposition to Augustinianism. For a history of conflicting theories see Schaff: *History of the Christian Church*, III, pp. 781-870; Shedd: *History of Christian Doctrines*, Bk. IV.

<sup>30</sup> Episcopius: *Apology*, VII.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, VII.

<sup>32</sup> Arminius: *Works*, I, p. 374.

<sup>33</sup> Episcopius: *Confession or Declaration*, XVII.

nature, without in any sense denying that such tendencies are actually present.

The Arminians did not immediately draw from this doctrine its psychological conclusions. Wesley became the outstanding exponent of Arminianism, and while he did not deny original sin or natural depravity he held that "there is no man that is in a state of nature," since all are "under the covenant of grace."<sup>84</sup> Wesley held "that every individual has a rudimentary moral nature derived from God—to which appeal can be made."<sup>85</sup> He was the first outstanding religious leader to endorse the Sunday School movement of Robert Raikes.

Wesley eliminated from the Article on Original Sin of the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Anglican Church the word "fault" and the phrase to the effect that such sin "deserveth God's wrath and indignation," and defined original sin to be "the corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness and of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually."<sup>86</sup>

The final steps in repudiating the extreme aspects of Augustinianism were taken by American Methodism. In Mr. Wesley's ritual or "Sunday Service" the formula for infant baptism contained these words: "Forasmuch as all men are conceived and born in sin, and that our Saviour Christ saith, None can enter into the Kingdom

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, IV, p. 204.

<sup>85</sup> Prince: *Wesley on Religious Education*, pp. 37, 38.

<sup>86</sup> Article VII of the Articles of Religion, found in the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church or the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. It should be pointed out, however, that subscription to these articles is not specifically demanded of either Methodist ministers or members, though ministers are forbidden to disseminate doctrines contrary thereto.



of God, except he be regenerated and born anew of water and of the Holy Ghost," and requested prayer that God 'of his bounteous *mercy*' would grant to the child "that thing which by nature he cannot have." The latter clause was revised by the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1864 to "that having, of his bounteous mercy, redeemed his child," and in 1916 the former clause was made to read as follows: "Forasmuch as God in His great mercy hath entered into covenant relations with man, whereby *he hath included children as partakers of its gracious benefits*; and our Lord Jesus Christ saith: Suffer the little children to come unto me; forbid them not; for so such belongeth the Kingdom of God."

The revision of Wesley's ritual by the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, was even more explicit. In 1886 this denomination changed the word "mercy" to "goodness" and requested prayer that the child should have 'the *continual replenishing* of his grace, that he may ever remain in the fellowship of God's holy Church.' In 1910 a further revision made the ritual to read, "Forasmuch as all men, though fallen in Adam, *are born into this world in Christ the redeemer*, heirs of life eternal and subjects of the saving grace of the Holy Spirit."

In neither of the two branches of Methodism is any mention made in the ritual of the necessity of conversion, both taking it for granted that children are born regenerate and may retain that nature. In the Methodist Episcopal Church, the sponsors are charged to religiously train the baptized child and "by precept and example" to "lead him into the love of God and the service of our Lord Jesus Christ." The Methodist Episcopal Church, South, lays a similar duty upon sponsors and instructs them to bring the child again to the altar "when he hath

reached the age of discretion, he being willing thereto and showing evidence of living faith in Christ" for a personal ratification of the act of dedication.<sup>37</sup>

### *Calvinistic Developments*

Calvinism possessed no doctrine similar to that of Prevenient Grace to relieve the sternness of the Westminster theology,<sup>38</sup> hence the transition to a position allowing for the gradual unfolding of the religious capacities latent in original nature was more difficult than in the case of Arminianism. Dissatisfaction with the more severe aspects of the Westminster Confession began to be openly expressed near the beginning of the nineteenth century. Dr. Archibald Alexander, President of Hampden Sidney College, definitely renounced the Calvinistic position on the damnation of infants.<sup>39</sup>

In 1810 occurred the schism in American Presbyterianism, the dissolved Cumberland Presbytery establishing a new denomination and definitely rejecting "the idea of fatality" in the creed and affirming the salvation of all infants. While affirming a belief in original sin and even

<sup>37</sup> See the rituals for the baptism of infants in the Methodist Disciplines. See also Harmon: *The Rites and Ritual of Episcopal Methodism*, pp. 168-190.

<sup>38</sup> The Westminster Confession teaches that man "is wholly defiled in all the faculties of soul and body" and that Adam's guilt "was imputed, and the same death in sin and corrupted nature" (VI, 2-6); man can neither "convert himself" nor "prepare himself thereto" (IX, 3, 4); God "effectually calls" some to salvation, but as for "the rest of mankind God was pleased . . . to pass by and ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice" (III, 7); "elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ," but "others not elected . . . never truly come to Christ and therefore cannot be saved" (X, 3, 4). In 1728 Professor Simpson of Glasgow was charged with heresy for teaching that "it is more than probable that all unbaptized infants dying in infancy are saved." Briggs: *Whither?*, p. 137.

<sup>39</sup> Briggs: *Whither?*, p. 133.

retaining the phrase "total depravity," the Cumberlandians incorporated an idea very similar to Prevenient Grace: "That the Spirit of God operates on the world, or, in other words, coextensively with the atonement of Christ, in such manner as to leave all men inexcusable"; "as the sinner is justified on the account of Christ's righteousness being imputed or accounted to him, on the same account he will be enabled to go on from one degree of grace to another, in a progressive life of sanctification."<sup>40</sup>

Dissatisfaction with the literal interpretation of the Westminster Standards was not confined to the Cumberland branch of American Presbyterianism but continued to develop within the more orthodox fold. Dr. Briggs wrote his *Whither* in 1890 purposely to show that the Church had departed from the Standards,<sup>41</sup> and he not only declared his own dissent but could quote to the same effect a large number of the leading Presbyterian theologians.<sup>42</sup> Briggs was convicted of heresy and unfrocked in 1893, but it is significant that his openly declared dissent from the Westminster Confession in the matter of original nature was not among the charges brought against him.

This dissatisfaction resulted in official action on the part of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., in 1903. In welcoming the Cumberland group back into the fold the older body conceded the doctrinal viewpoint of the dissenters, declared that communicants were not required to accept any doctrines other than faith in Christ, that

<sup>40</sup> Foster: *History of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church*, p. 302.

<sup>41</sup> *Whither?*, p. 23.

<sup>42</sup> Briggs' entire book is concerned with such material. For quotations from still other Calvinist leaders dissenting from the traditional position see Tillett: *A Statement of the Faith of World-Wide Methodism*, pp. 13-15

ministers, ruling elders, and deacons were expected to approve only the Westminster system of doctrine and not every particular statement of the Confession, that the Confession is not to be interpreted in any fatalistic sense, and that all infants dying in infancy are regenerated and saved."<sup>43</sup>

American Calvinism may thus be said to have made the transition from the traditional position to one that permits the development of religion from the capacities of original nature. While not as clearly expressed as in the Arminian doctrine of Prevenient Grace or the Cumberland theory of the imputation of Christ's righteousness, the same general end is reached by the denial of unconditional and arbitrary damnation, which meant essentially the enslavement of the human will, and the repudiation of infant damnation, which repudiation is in effect a denial of the guilt of original sin.

### *Evidence of the Present Data*

Turning from theology to life, the cases upon which the present study is based indicate the virtual disappearance of the older type of theological preaching. Even though memory was purposely stimulated by the form of the question,<sup>44</sup> only 180 of the 1834 persons who answered the question indicated that they had heard the sterner aspects of theology; 1177 described a moderate type dominated by such ideas as the love of God, forgiveness, ideals of Christ, and service, while 577 were indefinite in their replies. The following are typical cases of the theology classified as 'stern' in the present tabulations:

<sup>43</sup> See the Declaratory Statement, Westminster Confession of Faith.

<sup>44</sup> "What was the general type of preaching and its theology, such as total depravity, sin, salvation, damnation, etc.?"

*Case 23.* Total depravity, sin, hell fire, damnation, and salvation through the redeeming blood of Jesus Christ.

*Case 43.* Sin, its loathsome effects; hell and the damned; punishment forever and ever, if not converted, if converted and faithful to the end happiness and contentment forever.

*Case 302.* As I remember, the minister played all manner of sin and pictured hell in its worst conceivable form and to counteract this the Christ-life was offered to all who would accept.

*Case 327.* Second coming; we were conceived in sin and needed salvation. Christ died to pay for our redemption. We would be eternally damned if we did not accept Christ and live for Him.

It is of interest, as showing the decline of the older theology, to note that of the 180 stern theology cases 24 are in the group above forty years of age and 10 are negroes, the percentage of such cases in these groups being much higher than the general average. In the total group of 1834 persons describing the preaching heard 9.8 per cent remembered the sterner theology; among those above forty it was recalled by 29.6 per cent; among negroes by 15.2 per cent. Only 8 per cent of the white persons under forty years of age seem to possess any recollection of the stern theology, and the fact that this percentage is considerably less than one-third as high as among the older group indicates the change that has occurred in the type of preaching. The facts may be tabulated thus:

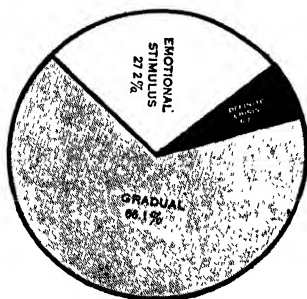
GROUP	STERN	MODERATE	INDEFINITE
Total Replying....	180	1177	577
Above 40.....	24	24	26
Negroes .....	10	35	16
Young Whites.....	146	1118	535

Table showing type of theology among different groups

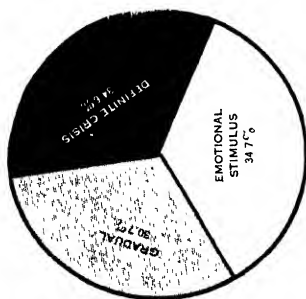
*Influence of Theology on Experience*

The question now to be discussed is whether the change in type of theology has produced a corresponding change in types of religious awakening.

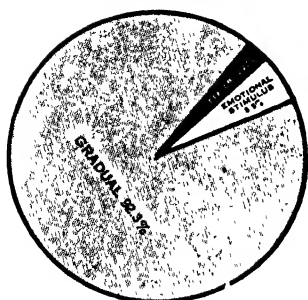
It has already been pointed out that among the entire group of 2174 persons studied 6.7 per cent underwent a religious awakening of the Definite Crisis type. In the stern theology group, however, such awakenings were experienced by 34.6 per cent, more than five times as many as the general average. The same disparity is seen in the cases of the group above forty and the negroes, among both of which groups the proportion of stern theology cases is high; 35.8 per cent of the older group and 25.8 per cent of the colored people report the Definite Crisis type of awakening. When the stern theology cases are compared with the members of the confirmation or non-evangelical denominations, which have never cultivated conversion experiences, it is found that while the stern theology group shows 34.6 per cent of Definite Crisis cases, the confirmation group, of whom only 5.3 per cent heard the sterner preaching, shows 2.3 per cent. These facts are all brought out by the following charts:



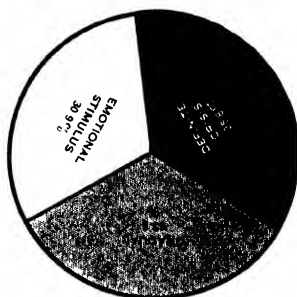
Types of awakening among  
total group of 2174 persons



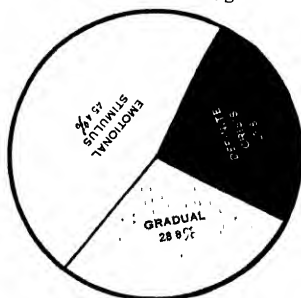
Types of awakening among  
176 persons hearing the stern  
theology



Types of awakening among 133 members of Confirmation Churches



Types of awakening among 81 persons above 40 years of age



Types of awakening among 66 negroes

The following table will present the same facts in another form:

GROUP	No.	DEF. CRI.	PER CENT	EMO. STIM.	PER CENT	GRAD.	PER CENT
Total .....	2174	147	6.7	590	27.2	1437	66.1
Stern Theology..	176	61	34.6	61	34.7	54	30.7
Confirmation ...	133	3	2.2	7	5.5	123	92.3
Above 40.....	81	29	35.8	25	30.9	27	33.3
Negroes .....	66	17	25.8	30	45.4	19	28.8

Table showing types of religious awakening among different groups

These data seem to indicate that the stern theology influences religious experience by inducing the Definite

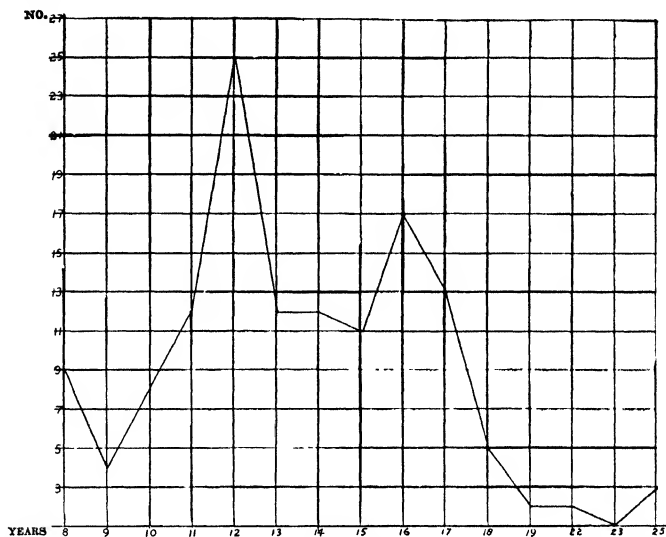
Crisis type. Considered in connection with the facts previously mentioned in this chapter they seem to offer convincing proof of Pratt's assertion above quoted. The data further indicate that the stern theology is disappearing, thus warranting the conclusion that the Definite Crisis awakenings will decrease. This conclusion is in line with the facts appearing in the previous chapters, that the tendency is in the direction of a smoothing of religious experience until it approaches a gradual and relatively uneventful process of unfolding not unlike the development of the other powers and capacities of life.

### *Theology and the Age of Religious Awakening*

In Chapter III, it was shown that the age of religious awakening has been reduced from sixteen to twelve. The same fact holds true for the stern theology group, but the graph for this group shows a difference in that there is a second peak at sixteen approaching the height of the twelve-year peak. The graph for the total group is almost an exact normal frequency curve, but the stern theology figure is bi-modal; to bring the latter to normalcy would require a degree of smoothing which would destroy its significance. The type of religious awakening induced by the type of theology under consideration thus departs considerably from the normal experience. The expectancy of and desire for a definite conversion experience seems to postpone the awakening of the religious consciousness for four years in many cases. The following age curve for the stern theology group should be compared with the curves for the total and Definite Crisis groups in Chapter III; it should also be compared with Starbuck's curves, reproduced in Chapter III, which comparison will show a marked similarity,



perhaps indicating the prevalence of the stern theology in the period during which Starbuck's respondents were undergoing their experiences.



Curve showing frequency of religious awakening in different years for 139 stern theology cases, male and female

## CHAPTER V

### RELIGIOUS TRAINING AND RELIGIOUS AWAKENING

ALTHOUGH the Christian Church has always promoted religious education,<sup>1</sup> its underlying purpose has undergone an evolution. In the early Church the catechumen was a Christian undergoing instruction in doctrine preliminary to admission into full Church membership,<sup>2</sup> a conception which has exerted an influence even to the present day; a study of catechisms will show that most of them are designed only to drill students in scriptural and doctrinal information.<sup>3</sup> The same may be said of the curriculum of the Sunday School until recently.<sup>4</sup>

Religious education has, however, passed from the stage of simple instruction in facts to the position that religion itself may be developed from the capacities of original nature by an educational process.<sup>5</sup> The aim of religious education has been thus defined: "To secure a continuous reconstruction of experience with an increasing sense of

<sup>1</sup> Brown: *A History of Religious Education in Recent Times*, Ch. I.

<sup>2</sup> Schaff: *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. II, pp. 256, 257.

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, the Shorter Catechism and the Larger Catechism, based upon the Westminster Confession.

<sup>4</sup> See Betts: *Curriculum of Religious Education*, Chs. IV-VI; Lankard: *History of the American Sunday School Curriculum*, Chs. IV-IX.

<sup>5</sup> Betts and Hawthorne: *Method in Teaching Religion*, Ch. II; Coe: *Education in Religion and Morals*, Chs. II-VIII; Fiske: *Purpose in Teaching Religion*, Chs. II-VI.

spiritual values, a growing consciousness of God and Christ in the life and an expanding disposition and ability to recognize and discharge one's obligations to God and his fellows." \*

The modern conception of the purpose of religious education is of recent development, having been first definitely enunciated by Horace Bushnell, in his *Christian Nurture*, in 1847. Bushnell's thesis was "that the child is to grow up a Christian, and never know himself as being otherwise." <sup>7</sup> This was a revolutionary doctrine in 1847 and years were required for the principle thus announced to secure general acceptance. Such acceptance has at last been accorded by most leaders in religious education.

Has this modern conception of the purpose of religious education brought about any change in individual religious experience? That is the problem set for discussion in the present chapter. While the newer conception of purpose has been prevalent for too short a period and has been too imperfectly realized to determine the facts with absolute certainty and definiteness, it at least seems possible to discover certain trends which may serve as the basis for prediction and a further development of the training program.

### *Religious Education and Original Nature*

In view of the discussion of the theological conception of original nature in the previous chapter it is deemed advisable, before attempting an answer to the question above propounded, to inquire concerning the theory of original nature underlying the modern program of re-

\* Stout: *Organization and Administration of Religious Education*, pp. 66-69.

<sup>7</sup> Bushnell: *Christian Nurture*, p. 4.

ligious education. It has been indicated that the traditional theological dogma of depravity has been modified. This does not mean that either theology or religious education has necessarily discarded the doctrine of original sin, for the very fact that all agree that it is necessary to *do something* to insure the religious character of the individual is evidence that workers in this field recognize the general principle of inherent sin as a psychological and social fact; it implies a recognition of the fact that the individual, if left to his own inclinations, would be more likely to go wrong than to undergo an ideal moral and spiritual development.\*

The modern theory of religious education denies the dogma of total depravity insofar as that dogma holds that original nature contains no moral or religious capacities. It is, however, far from affirming that the theological idea of original sin has no basis in true psychology; if it makes little or no use of the term "original sin" it is because of the variety of interpretations of which it is susceptible rather than a lack of sympathy with its underlying truth. "Education in Religion," says Coe, "must start out with the assumption that the child has a positive religious nature. This does not imply any of the following notions: (a) That the child is 'all right' as he is. Even a mature Christian is not 'all right.' (b) That the child can grow up properly by a merely 'natural process,' without divine help. Even a mature Christian needs daily help. (c) That the life principle in the child can take care of itself without our help. (d) That the

\* For theological interpretations in harmony with the modern theory of religious education see Bushnell: *Christian Nurture*; Atkins: *The Kingdom in the Cradle*; Chappell: *Building the Kingdom*.

child has any definitely conscious religious experience or sense of God." \*

Religious education accepts and builds on the findings of modern psychology with reference to the original nature of man.<sup>10</sup> If it finds no natural depravity, neither does it find the so-called "religious instinct." It finds rather a native equipment of "instincts" or "drives," reflexes, and capacities which possess no inherent moral qualities<sup>11</sup> but which are capable of development in any direction, according to the stimuli presented by environment. It finds a capacity for religion, which, in view of both nature and environment, is more than a mere passive possibility. To quote Coe again, "the possession of a positive religious nature implies three things: (a) That the child has more than a passive capacity for spiritual things. Just as animals go forth in search of food, so a positive spiritual nature goes forth spontaneously in search of God. (b) That nothing short of union with God can really bring a human being to himself. (c) That the successive phases in the growth of the child personality may be, and normally are, so many phases of a growing consciousness of the divine meaning of life. Both the idea of God and the religious regulation of life can develop from crude beginnings, just as the song of a lark comes out of a songless egg."<sup>12</sup>

### *What Is Original Sin?*

What, then, is the attitude of religious education to the

<sup>9</sup> *Education in Religion and Morals*, p. 61.

<sup>10</sup> See Thorndike: *Original Nature of Man*; Norsworthy and Whiteley: *Psychology of Childhood*, Chs. I, II.

<sup>11</sup> Betts and Hawthorne: *Method in Teaching Religion*, Ch. II.

<sup>12</sup> *Education in Religion and Morals*, p. 62.

theological doctrine of original sin? Recognizing that this question carries the discussion into philosophy and away from the scientific attitude which the present treatise is endeavoring to maintain, and that the personal equation may produce as many opinions as there are theorists, it nevertheless seems permissible to point out that religious education has no quarrel with the doctrine when interpreted in the light of experience and science.

That original nature contains a capacity for evil, quite as much as a capacity for good, is a fact of experience which few will deny. The scientific mind would hesitate, however, to ascribe this fact literally to the primal sin of the first man and the consequent transmission of a moral taint in the stream of life. Genetically considered, the "sinful tendency" may be explained by the presence of so-called "animal instincts," drives which were suited to and necessary to survival in the environment in which they were developed but which in the present environment possess no such value; which, indeed, work against the social welfare unless sublimated and directed into socially useful channels. Socially considered, an explanation may also be found in the fact that in an advancing civilization the highest ideals, which constitute the measures of sinfulness and righteousness, are, in the nature of the case, always in advance of our average attainments, to reach which requires an effort not necessary to the man who is content to seek the gratification of his selfish desires rather than to meet and live up to his social obligations. In this sense it is quite true that the sinful or self-centered life—called by theology "natural," and rightly so, since it finds its basis in original nature—is

the path of least resistance; while the higher morality, in large measure a social product, requires constant struggle.<sup>13</sup>

Translated into the language of theology, this constitutes a doctrine of original sin. It makes necessary the operation of the divine grace in the religious life and forbids the assumption that man can work out his salvation alone and unaided. To supply such aid is the task of religious education, which is far from dispensing with God and his grace in the process.

That this is a fair interpretation of the position of religious education may be seen from the following statement on "the meaning of religious education" by an outstanding leader in the field.<sup>14</sup>

"What, then, is religious education? What does it seek to do and how does it go at it? First, on the negative side, what religious education does not do. It does not, as some have feared, seek to substitute any process of mere training for the spiritual element in religion. It does not leave the divine factor out, offering therefor a fund of information about religion. It does not deny the fact and power of conversion acting on a life that has drifted from its spiritual relationships and needs to recover them. It does not aim at an ethical system alone, unsupported by the religious motive. In short, it does

<sup>13</sup> For modern discussions of original sin see Bicknell: *The Christian Idea of Sin and Original Sin*; Williams: *The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin*; Mackintosh: *The Christian Experience of Forgiveness*, Ch. III; Campbell: *The New Theology*, Ch. IV; Clarke: *An Outline of Christian Theology*, Part III; Dale: *Christian Doctrine*, Ch. IX, n. W; Brown: *Christian Theology in Outline*, Part IV; Abbott: *What Christianity Means to Me*, pp. 137-142; Gladden: *Present Day Theology*, Ch. IV; Tennant: *The Fall and Original Sin*.

<sup>14</sup> Betts: *The New Program of Religious Education*, pp. 39, 40.

not omit any agency commonly used by the church to stimulate and develop the religious consciousness, with this exception; religious education *seeks to save the need* for a reclamatory conversion, and in its stead substitute a gradual and natural spiritual growth in the course of which, *at the proper age, the child will make a personal decision and acceptance of the Christian way in which he has from the beginning been led.* On the positive side, religious education takes the child, endowed through his original nature as he is with capacities both for evil and good, and seeks to stimulate the good and suppress the bad, using for this purpose religious instruction, nurture, and guidance. Far from discarding or disregarding the supernatural factor, the working of the 'grace of God,' religious education believes so thoroughly in this factor that its great aim is to keep the bond between the child and his heavenly Father from ever being weakened or broken. It seeks so to train the child and stimulate and guide his spiritual development that this divine grace shall have constant access to the heart and life, a sustaining, organizing, upbuilding power acting continuously upon the soul, rather than expecting it to reclaim a sin-sick soul which has lost its way."

### *Current Home Training in Religion*

Turning now from the theoretical aspects of religious education to the data in hand, it is found that of the 2174 persons whose experiences are herein considered, practically all were reared in a religious environment; in 1968 cases both parents were religious, in 137 the mother only, in 3 the father only, in 31 neither parent, and in 66 cases no report was made. The evidence here is strong



that religious persons come almost exclusively from homes wherein the religious attitude is prevalent.

In response to the invitation to describe the religious training in the home 2102 individuals complied with brief descriptions, which were evaluated and classified as "good," "fair," and "poor." By good home training is meant that which shows some grasp of the modern conception of religious education; that which consists in merely keeping religious ideas in the environment is called fair; that is poor in which the religious element is practically absent.

The following examples will illustrate what is meant by good home training in religion:

*Case 104.* I have been going to Sunday School regularly ever since I can remember and we have family prayer every night and blessing is asked at each meal. I also go to Church regularly. Mother taught me prayers.

*Case 328.* I was brought up in a Christian home in which daily devotions were a part of the life. We read, studied our Sunday School lessons and prayed together. We also discussed our problems and were taught that God loved, cared for and guided us no matter what we did or where we went.

*Case 404.* Parents were strict in religious matters. Religious matters were foremost in home. Family Bible reading and discussions. Family prayer.

*Case 724.* Father, a Scotch Presbyterian; mother, a Baptist. We were reared strictly and regularly in the Church. We had prayers, the Bible, and religious conversations in the home.

*Case 758.* I was taught the various stories in the Bible. My mother had a book of Bible stories which she read to me often. I was taught to go to Sunday School each Sunday and

know my lesson, say my prayers, and read the Bible. The rights and wrongs of life.

It will at once be seen that quite a liberal interpretation and the exercise of some imagination is necessary in order to call these cases examples of good home training in religion. In view of the fact that the principles of modern religious education are of such recent development, however, care has been exercised to avoid applying the canons too strictly to ordinary homes. Such training as above illustrated is good only in the sense that it is above the average as revealed in the records being studied.

The following cases may serve as examples of fair religious education in the home:

*Case 401.* Taught to pray at bed time when a child, but very little definite training in religion.

*Case 721.* My mother gave me Foster's *Story of the Bible* to read. The orthodox God was drilled into me by constant stories on needed occasions. I was taught the Child's prayer. "Now I lay me, etc." I never had to read or memorize any religious literature.

*Case 752.* My training at home was not forced on me. I was taught what religion was and what good it would do me. But never forced to attend Sunday School and Church.

As may be expected from the fact that the above cases are classified as fair training, the religious nurture of those in the poor category is practically non-existent. The following records are typical:

*Case 432.* Mother died when I was  $2\frac{1}{2}$  years old. My

father left for the west. I was left to different relatives to rear. I do not remember much about my early childhood. I only remember the terrible void in my life, no mother to love me.

*Case 725.* Home training: uneven. My mother was from devout Baptist stock. My father the son of a gambler. He, my father, has always been a heavy drinker. He and my four brothers are, as all my uncles, agnostics.

*Case 751.* I did not have the Bible teachings quoted to me; the reward of heaven nor the punishment of hell were never held out to me. All these things were taken for granted.

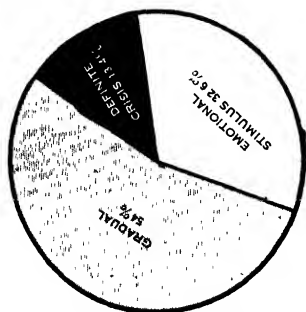
In arranging such data it is plain that much overlapping must occur; hence only a general value can be attached to the classifications. The results show that in only 265 cases, 12.7 per cent of the whole group, can the individuals be said to have received a good home training, even when the term is so loosely applied; 1603, or 73.7 per cent, were classed as fair; while 234, or 10.7 per cent, belonged in the poor category.

So far as the data warrant conclusions, it may be said that in few homes are the scientific principles of religious education being effectively applied and the religious training of the children conducted with anything like clearly realized aims and carefully considered methods. In comparatively few homes from which religious persons come, however, is religious nurture entirely absent. In most cases the training is of a haphazard nature, the main value of which is that some religious ideas are kept in the environment and certain religious observances and moral habits cultivated. In view of the fact that such

results as have been obtained have come from such desultory home training, it is seen that here is a field which should be assiduously cultivated by religious education.

### *Home Training and Religious Experience*

The data indicate that the lack of home training in religion tends to prevent the gradual development of the religious consciousness and to encourage the more radical type of awakening. Of those included in the poor home training group, 31, or 13.4 per cent, experienced the Definite Crisis awakening, 76, or 32.6 per cent underwent the Emotional Stimulus experience, and 126, or 54 per cent, were of the Gradual type. The following chart presents the statistics:



Types of religious awakening  
among 234 persons with poor  
home training

A comparison of this chart with that for the total group shows that the percentage of Definite Crisis cases has been exactly doubled for the group with poor home training, while the Gradual cases have been decreased accordingly. The following tabulation shows the comparison:

## *Religious Training and Religious Awakening* 101

GROUP	No.	DEF. CRI.	EMO. STIM.	GRADUAL
Total .....	2174	6.7	27.2	66.1
Poor Home Training.....	234	13.4	32.6	54.0

Table showing percentage of different types of religious awakening among Total and Poor Home Training groups

These facts are in line with those discovered in the study of other groupings and reënforce the conclusion that religious education tends to smooth religious experience while its lack tends to cause awakening to occur by a more or less cataclysmic emotional upheaval.

### *The Sunday School and Religious Experience*

Of the 2174 persons whose records are under consideration, practically all—2025, or 93.1 per cent, to be exact—were regular attendants at Sunday School during childhood. In response to the query concerning the influence of the Sunday School in religious experience, 131, or 6 per cent, indicated that it exerted a strong or determining influence, while 1430, or 67.2 per cent, reported a moderate and 445, or 20.5 per cent, a negligible influence. On this subject, however, the respondents are scarcely qualified to express authoritative opinions, the whole data indicating that the Sunday School was more influential than the subjects themselves realized.

A segregation of 130 persons who attended Sunday School irregularly during childhood discloses the fact that this group shows the largest percentage of Definite Crisis awakenings of any group save those above forty years of age, those who heard the stern theology, and the negroes. The irregular Sunday School group report 25.4 per cent of Definite Crisis experiences, 25.4 per cent Emotional Stimulus, and 49.2 per cent Gradual, as illustrated by the following chart:



Types of religious awakening  
among 130 irregular Sunday  
School attendants

It appears therefore that a lack of Sunday School training tends even more strongly than a lack of home training to prevent gradual and normal religious development and to induce the more radical emotional upheavals.

### *Religious Experience Without Previous Training*

A still more striking evidence of the influence of religious training on religious experience is seen when a grouping is made of those who had a poor home training and were also irregular in Sunday School attendance. There are 51 such persons who obtained little or no training anywhere, and among these the Definite Crisis cases numbered 16, or 31.4 per cent, the Emotional Stimulus 15, or 30 per cent, and the Gradual 20, or 38.6 per cent. Only the stern theology group and those above forty show so large a percentage of Definite Crisis cases as these persons without previous training in religion. The following tabulation compares such poorly trained persons with the average as represented by the total group being studied:

## *Religious Training and Religious Awakening* 103

GROUP	No.	DEF. CRI.	EMO. STIM.	GRADUAL
Total .....	2174	6.7	27.2	66.1
Poor Home Training.....	234	13.4	32.6	54.0
Irregular S. S.....	130	25.4	25.4	49.2
Poor Home Training and Irreg. S. S.....	51	31.4	30.0	38.6

Table showing percentage of different types of religious awakening for the total group and for persons without religious training

Here is a convincing exhibit of the influence of religious education on types of religious awakening. Just as the stern theology tends to induce the radical emotional cataclysm and prevent gradual development, so modern religious education tends in the exactly opposite direction of preventing the cataclysm and encouraging gradual growth. The proof is strongly in support of the thesis previously advanced, namely, that the tendency is definitely in the direction of a smoothing of religious experience and the elimination of the severe crises.

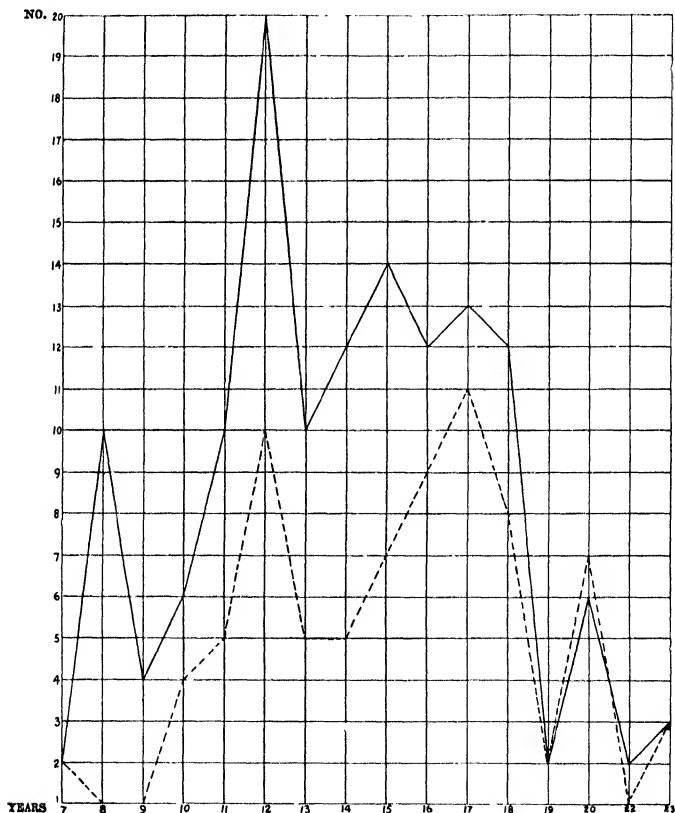
A study of the age of religious awakening among poorly trained persons reveals another departure from the average of the total group. The figure for the whole number of cases, it will be remembered, is almost an exact normal frequency curve with the peak at twelve years. The figure for the Poor Home Training group, however, is a tri-modal figure with the main peak at twelve and other prominent peaks at fifteen and seventeen; while that for the irregular Sunday School attendants is bi-modal, the highest point being at seventeen with that at twelve but slightly lower. The facts are as follows:

AGE	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Poor Home Training.	10	4	6	20	20	10	12	14	12	13	12	2	6
Irreg. S. S.....	0	1	4	5	10	5	5	7	9	11	8	2	7

Number of religious awakenings in each year for 144 persons with poor home training and 83 irregular Sunday School attendants, males and females

## 104     *The Psychology of Religious Awakening*

The age data for these two groups plotted on a curve results in the following figure, which should be compared with the figure for the total number of cases shown in Chapter III:



Curves showing frequency of religious awakening in different years among poorly trained persons, male and female

————— 144 Poor Home Training group

..... 83 Irregular Sunday School group



## CHAPTER VI

### ENVIRONMENT AND RELIGIOUS AWAKENING

ATTENTION has already been directed to the fact that since the empirical studies of Starbuck were made many changes in the environment of the general population have taken place and it was intimated that such changes may have reacted upon current types of religious experience. In the present chapter it is proposed to study religious experience in the light of certain environmental conditions in an attempt to discover whether the changes have exerted any determinable influence.

It must be pointed out that the term "environment" is employed in the popular rather than the scientific sense and relates to outstanding physical surroundings, of which only a few selected factors will be studied. Strictly speaking, the subjects already discussed, such as theology and religious training in home and Sunday School, properly belong under the head of environment, since the word covers every influence that bears upon life save the original elements of inheritance carried in the chromosomes of the cell.<sup>1</sup> The selection of the factors to be studied has been made on the basis of the data available in the records in hand and they are brought together in this chapter only because it is convenient to so group them. The fact that the term "environment" is used to cover them is therefore not to be taken as

<sup>1</sup> See Conklin: *Heredity and Environment*, p. 213.

implying that the other factors studied are any less environmental in nature or that any definite religious elements belong to original inheritance.

### *Environment and Previous Studies*

Most of the older empirical studies of religious experience were made before the definite waning of the original sin psychology and the revival method. The several so-called Great Awakenings which have provided materials for most of those who have reported on American conversions and revival phenomena<sup>2</sup> may be classified in two groups, according to the spirit which produced them: those of the colonial period under Frelinghuysen, Whitefield, Stoddard, Edwards, and the Tennants<sup>3</sup> which were Calvinistic in temper and represented reactions against the current materialism and the perpetuation of a state-endowed Church;<sup>4</sup> and those of the Kentucky and Tennessee wilderness at the close of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries which were directed mainly by the Cumberland Presbyterians and the Methodists and produced by frontier conditions.<sup>5</sup> In the former the stern theology was dominant; in the latter such theology was seconded by the lack of cultural advantages, the rude and dangerous conditions in which the people lived, and the social situation into which the camp meeting fitted so admirably.

In the colonial revivals from 25,000 to 50,000 persons

<sup>2</sup> For example, Davenport: *Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals*; Maxson: *The Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies*; Mode: *The Frontier Spirit in American Christianity*; Pratt: *The Religious Consciousness*; Cartwright: *Autobiography*.

<sup>3</sup> See Maxson: *The Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies*.

<sup>4</sup> Mode: *The Frontier Spirit in American Christianity*, pp. 57, 58.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, Ch. III.

were converted and joined the Churches.<sup>6</sup> The wilderness revivals were even more powerful, influencing not only the frontier but sweeping northward and invading the cultural centers. One-third of the students at Yale College were converted in 1802 and there were fifteen revivals there in the first half of the century; Princeton, Williams, and Amherst were similarly visited, and so strong became the revival influence that the teaching of morals and ethics was almost eliminated as implying a distrust of the Holy Spirit and a reliance upon the "filthy rags" or "works."<sup>7</sup>

Nowhere else save in America has the revival appeared as the accepted method of recruiting Church membership, and nowhere else have the Churches definitely striven for a converted constituency;<sup>8</sup> these two facts go far toward explaining the type of experience so widely prevalent here in the past and which has been made the subject of such careful study. Pratt<sup>9</sup> and others have shown that the revival was ideally suited to produce radical emotional experiences and actually did produce them. As late as 1899 Starbuck found that one-half of the females and one-third of the males studied by him were converted in revivals while still others were converted elsewhere immediately after attending a revival,<sup>10</sup> and he concludes that the effect of the revival is to force the awakening process and hasten the conversion experience.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Hall: *Adolescence*, Vol. II, p. 285.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 287, 288.

<sup>8</sup> Mode: *The Frontier Spirit in American Christianity*, Ch. III.

<sup>9</sup> *The Religious Consciousness*, Ch. IX.

<sup>10</sup> *The Psychology of Religion*, p. 25.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

Unfortunately, no statistical data are available to accurately indicate the influence of physical surroundings on types of religious experience. But the literature of the subject, to much of which reference has already been made, indicates with a fair degree of clearness that pioneer social conditions, absence of cultural advantages, prevalence of a stern theology, and evangelism of the camp meeting or revival type tend to the production of the more cataclysmic form of emotional phenomena. That such is the case is further indicated by the fact that with the passing of these conditions there appears a falling off in the relative number of such experiences.

#### *Religious Experience in City, Town, and Country*

Among the outstanding social phenomena of the recent past is the migration of the population from the rural sections to the towns and cities. The last census preceding the date of Starbuck's study, that of 1890, showed that 64.6 per cent of the population of the United States was rural, living in the open country or in villages having less than 2500 inhabitants, while only 35.4 per cent was urban, or dwelling in towns and cities; at that time only 29 per cent of the people lived in cities having more than 8000 population. The census of 1920, however, showed that only 48.6 per cent were left in the open country and villages while 51.4 per cent were in the towns and cities, with 43.8 per cent in cities with more than 8000 inhabitants.

This migration has quite adversely affected the rural Church. Many thousands have died and practically all have declined in strength and influence. Few to-day have full-time resident ministers, most of them enjoying

only one or two services each month. Since the ministers are not paid a living wage, the country Church has the least efficient and most poorly trained pastoral oversight. The Church in the small village is ordinarily little better in leadership and efficiency than the country Church. The migration of landowners to the towns and cities has in many cases left the country districts largely peopled with tenants, among whom prevail lower cultural standards than prevailed among the landlords who lived on the farms a generation ago.<sup>12</sup> Here the stern theology, the revival of the old type, inefficient methods of religious education, and a general lack of cultural advantages may be expected to prevail to a larger degree than is true in the towns or among the average and better social classes in the cities.

Among the 2174 individuals with which the present study is concerned 423, or 19.5 per cent of the whole group, were reared in the open country, 220, or 10.1 per cent in villages, 893, or 41.1 per cent, in towns, and 592, or 27.2 per cent, in cities.<sup>13</sup> The occupations of the fathers were as follows: agriculture, 525, or 24.1 per cent; business, 1070, or 49.2; professional, 194, or 8.9 per cent; religious, 281, or 12.9 per cent.

<sup>12</sup> These facts are so well-known to students of the subject that it has not been deemed necessary to take the space to substantiate them here. Statistical proof will be found in Clark: *The Rural Church in the South*; Clark: *Healing Ourselves*, Ch. VIII; Earp: *The Rural Church Movement*, Ch. V; Bricker: *Solving the Country Church Problem*, Chs. III-VI; Brunner: *Church Life in the Rural South*; *Rural Church Life in the Middle West*; *The Country Church in Colonial Counties*; *The Church on the Changing Frontier*; *The Town and Country Church in the United States*.

<sup>13</sup> The populations of places were not given nor were the names always mentioned, hence the designation "town" or "city" must be generally understood, and not as necessarily following the definitions of the census.

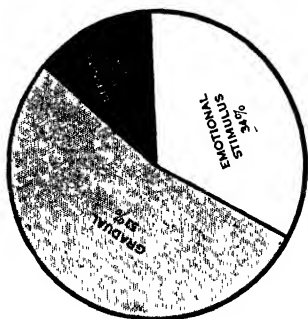
It is noticeable that in both the stern theology and irregular Sunday School groups the country residents predominate over those from other places, 70, or 39.8 per cent of the former and 61, or 46.9 per cent, of the latter being from the rural sections; this is not true, however, of the poor home training group, the percentage from both town and city being larger. It is the rural Church, and not the rural home, that is relatively backward and inefficient in religious training.

The findings in the matter of religious experience in country and city are true to form. Definite Crisis awakenings are above the norm in the country and below it in city, while the Gradual cases are respectively below and above the general average. The facts are shown in the following table:

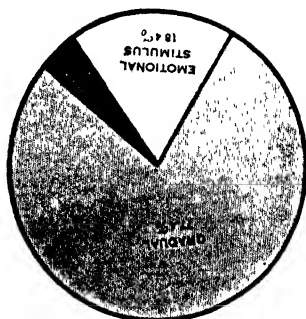
GROUP	No.	DEF. CRI.	EMO. STIM.	GRADUAL
Total ....	2,174	6.7	27.2	66.1
Rural ...	423	13.0	34.0	53.0
City ....	571	4.2	18.4	77.4

Table showing percentage of various types of religious awakening among Total, Rural, and City groups

In the cities, where the most modern Churches and Sunday Schools are usually found, the highest percentage of Gradual awakenings are also found; the percentage of such experiences is higher among the city group than any other group segregated in the present study save the confirmation group, 95 per cent of whom are in towns and cities, and the Southern Presbyterians, who are found mainly in the same places. The following charts show the difference between the country and city with reference to prevalent types of awakening:



Types of religious awakening among 423 rural residents



Types of religious awakening among 571 city residents

### *Ministerial Parentage and Religious Experience*

In the group of cases being studied there are 280 persons whose fathers were ministers, missionaries, or other full-time religious workers. As might be expected, nearly all of these were more or less carefully trained in religion, only 3 being found in the poor home training category and but 8 among the irregular Sunday School attendants. Of the number, 24 were in the stern theology class, the percentage therein being almost exactly the same as for the total number of respondents.

True to the previous findings, the sons and daughters of religious workers, with better previous training and no higher percentage of stern theology, show a relatively larger number of Gradual experiences, 73.1 per cent as against the norm of 66.1 per cent for the whole group. An unusual situation appears, however, in that the Definite Crisis cases are also slightly increased, 7.3 per cent as against the norm of 6.7 per cent. This difference in itself is too small to possess significance, but it discloses the interesting fact that the smoothing of experi-

ence in the case of this group was made in the Emotional Stimulus type and not in the more radical awakenings. It has already been pointed out that there is but a slight real difference between the Emotional Stimulus and the Gradual experiences. The explanation here is perhaps that the better religious training and the constant guidance of the ministerial parents enabled the subjects to more accurately interpret their experiences, and hence to attach no undue significance to events which others regarded as of greater concern. At any rate, this group affords another proof that religious education tends to produce the gradual unfolding of the religious capacities of life.

Reduced to tabular form the facts for the group under discussion are as follows:

GROUP	No.	POOR HOME TRAINING	IRREG. S.S.	STERN THEO.	DEF. CRI.	EMO. STIM.	GRADUAL
Total ..	2174	6.2	6.1	8.3	6.7	27.2	66.1
Children of Rel. Workers	280	1.1	2.9	8.6	7.3	19.6	73.1

Percentage table showing religious training, prevalence of stern theology, and types of religious awakening for total group and for children of religious workers

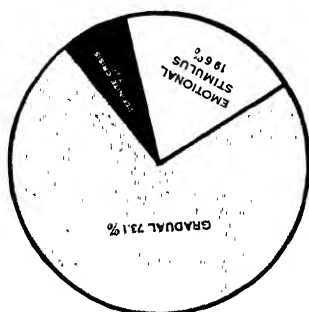
The chart illustrating the types of religious awakening among the 280 sons and daughters of ministers, missionaries and other vocational religious workers is reproduced on the next page.

### *Religious Vocation and Religious Experience*

There are in the group whose experiences are herein being analyzed 574 individuals who themselves are or intend to be ministers, missionaries, directors of religious education, or other vocational religious workers. These



depart from the total group in several particulars. Relatively more come from the rural sections and villages and fewer from the towns and cities. There are more sons and daughters of farmers and religious workers, and fewer from the homes of business and professional men. More, proportionately, had good home training, fewer had fair, and, somewhat surprisingly, more had poor. More than twice as large a percentage heard the stern theology.



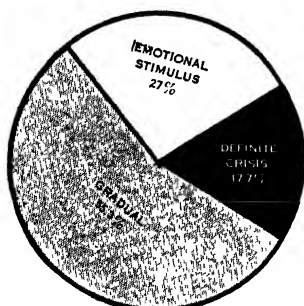
Types of religious awakening  
among 280 children of religious workers

These young preachers and missionaries experienced relatively more Definite Crisis awakenings and fewer Gradual experiences than the average. The Definite Crisis cases here number 17.7 per cent, against 6.7 per cent for the whole group; with 55.3 per cent Gradual compared with the total average of 66.1 per cent. The tabulation stands as follows:

GROUP	No.	DEF. CRI.	EMO. STIM.	GRADUAL
Total .....	2174	6.7	27.7	66.1
Religious Workers ..	574	17.7	27.0	55.3

Table showing percentage of different types of religious awakening among total group and 574 religious workers

Reduced to chart form the data for the group of religious workers gives the following results:



Types of religious awakening  
among 574 religious workers

There seems to be nothing in the data at hand to explain the fact that Definite Crisis awakenings are more prevalent among young preachers and missionaries than among the common run of religious persons. The phenomenon is perhaps a matter of temperament, in which case it appears that the suggestible and passive type of individual, of sanguine (prompt-weak) or melancholic (slow-intense) temperament, in whom sensibility rather than intellect or will is predominant, adopt the religious vocations more readily than the average.<sup>14</sup> In every grouping that has been made, with the single exception of the negroes, an increase above the norm in Definite Crisis experiences shows also an increase in the number of ministers and missionaries coming from that group, indicating that the Definite Crisis awakening so impresses religion upon the consciousness as to lead to the adoption of a religious calling. The following table illustrates the point:

<sup>14</sup> See Coe: *The Spiritual Life*, Ch. III.

GROUP	DEF. CRISIS AWAKENINGS	RELIGIOUS WORKERS
Total .....	6.7	26.1
Definite Crisis .....	100.0	70.6
Stern Theology .....	34.0	57.4
Confirmation .....	2.3	20.3
Poor Home Training .....	13.5	32.1
Group Above 40 .....	35.8	39.5
Irregular Sunday School .....	25.4	39.2

Percentage table showing relation of Definite Crisis awakenings and vocational religious workers among various groups

The data clearly indicate that religious workers are coming from the ranks of those who have undergone the Definite Crisis type of awakening. They also indicate that the tendency is toward the elimination of that type. Here thus emerges an important question: Will this tendency result in a material reduction in the number of persons offering themselves for religious vocations, and eventually give to the Church a staff of workers with abnormal experiences? As interesting as the question is, the data in hand provide no certain answer. Granted that the trend is in that direction, it is to be recalled that persons having undergone a radical experience may be expected to preach it as valuable or necessary, and that such preaching tends to create an expectancy for and bring about that same type of experience on the part of others. Thus is formed a circle which tends to perpetuate the emotional type of awakening. At any rate, it must be borne in mind that the percentage of such experiences among religious workers is only relatively high; actually there are 82 such persons in each 100 who have had no such awakening.

### *Religious Experience Among the Denominations*

A discussion of the types of religious experience prevalent among American denominations might with propri-

ety have been included in the chapter dealing with the influence of theology upon religious awakening, and indeed the data drawn from the confirmation bodies were therein presented. But since, as has been seen, the various Churches have quite generally adopted the viewpoint of modern religious education and are in general terms agreed as to the course that may be taken by the awaking religious consciousness, it seems as well to treat the denominational influence in the present chapter.

It has been shown in Chapter IV that the lowest percentage of Definite Crisis awakenings (2.2 per cent) and the highest proportion of Gradual cases (92.3 per cent) were found among the adherents of the confirmation denominations, which have never cultivated nor highly evaluated emotional conversions. What is the situation among the so-called evangelical bodies, which have definitely striven for a converted membership?

A segregation of the adherents of these bodies shows that the highest percentage of Definite Crisis experiences and lowest percentage of Gradual awakenings prevail among the Baptists; the Methodists occupy the middle position in both regards; while the Presbyterians show the fewest Definite Crisis and the largest percentage of Gradual cases. But in none of the denominations does the Definite Crisis type even approach the prevalency of the Gradual.

The data for the various denominations, separated, as the Churches themselves are divided, into Northern and Southern sections,<sup>18</sup> are as follows:

<sup>18</sup> The separation is on the basis of the section in which the respondents reside, as it has not always been possible to determine the actual branch of the communion with which affiliation is claimed.

CHURCH	No.	DEF. CRI.	EMO. STIM.	GRADUAL
Baptist (North) <sup>16</sup> .....	128	19.8	36.7	44.5
Baptist (South) <sup>17</sup> .....	124	9.7	50.0	40.3
Methodist (North).....	158	8.2	18.4	73.4
Methodist (South).....	827	7.0	32.5	60.5
Presbyterian (North).....	192	4.7	12.0	83.3
Presbyterian (South).....	174	2.2	18.4	79.4

Table showing percentage of different types of religious awakening  
among leading evangelical denominations

In accordance with the procedure hitherto followed, the same data are also presented in chart form, as shown on page 102.

The data here presented bring out the fact that in all these denominations Definite Crisis experiences are more prevalent in the North than in the South; <sup>18</sup> this is true between the different faiths and also between the different branches of the same general communion. The Gradual cases also predominate in the North, while the South shows a larger percentage of Emotional Stimulus awakenings.

When the evangelical denominations are combined and a sectional separation is effected the following results are obtained:

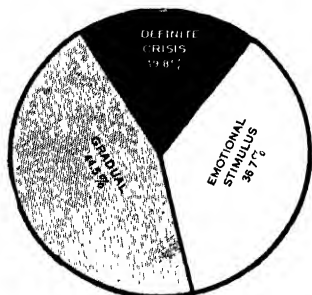
GROUP	No.	DEF. CRI.	EMO. STIM.	GRADUAL
Northern Evangelicals.....	478	9.8	20.5	67.7
Southern Evangelicals.....	1,125	6.4	32.4	61.2

Table showing percentage of different types of religious awakening  
among Northern and Southern Evangelicals

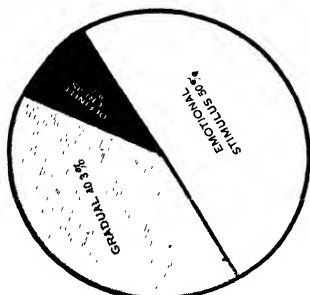
<sup>16</sup> Among the Northern Baptist cases there are 26 negroes: 16 Definite Crisis; 6 Emotional Stimulus; 4 Gradual.

<sup>17</sup> Among the Southern Baptist cases there are 7 negroes: 2 Definite Crisis; 4 Emotional Stimulus; 1 Gradual.

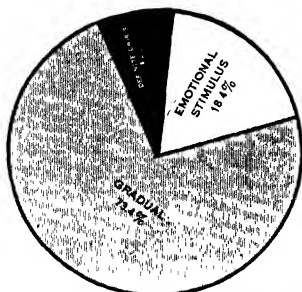
<sup>18</sup> Note, however, that the universe of cases from the South is much larger than from the North.



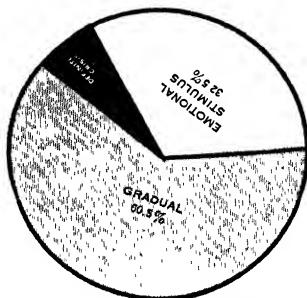
Types of religious awakening among 128 Northern Baptists



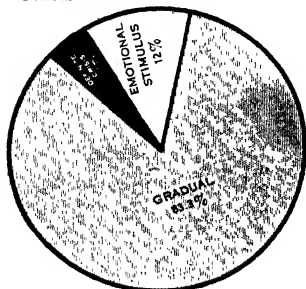
Types of religious awakening among 124 Southern Baptists



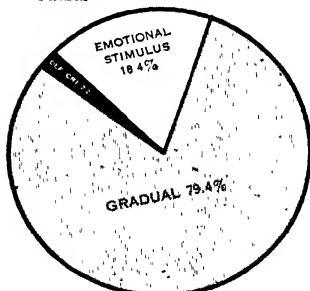
Types of religious awakening among 158 Northern Methodists



Types of religious awakening among 827 Southern Methodists

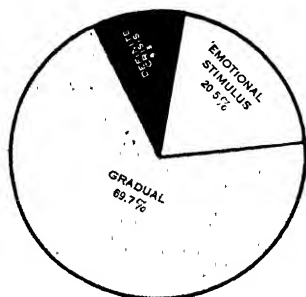


Types of religious awakening among 192 Northern Presbyterians

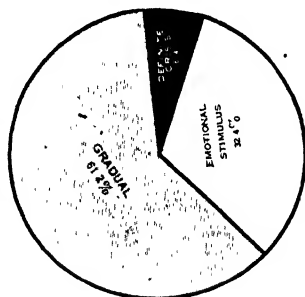


Types of religious awakening among 174 Southern Presbyterians

The Northern group varies from the norm of the total in showing more Definite Crisis, fewer Emotional Stimulus, and more Gradual cases; the South shows about the same number of Definite Crisis, more Emotional Stimulus, and fewer Gradual cases. The charts for the groups appear below:



Types of religious awakening  
among 478 Northern Evan-  
gelicals



Types of religious awakening  
among 1125 Southern Evan-  
gelicals

## CHAPTER VII

### EMOTIONAL LIFE AND RELIGIOUS AWAKENING

EMOTION has been simply defined by Woodworth <sup>1</sup> as "a moved or stirred-up state of the mind" or "a conscious stirred-up state of the organism." While the phenomenon has both subjective and objective aspects, only the former will be dealt with in the present study, the problem being the consciousness of the individual himself.

The study of religious emotions is a difficult procedure. At the time of awakening the general ferment of adolescence is usually under way; every element of life is involved and the selection of those factors possessing religious significance is an almost impossible task. As a matter of fact all the factors possess such significance; this fact may not, however, be apparent to the subject himself, whose descriptions are therefore likely to omit very valuable elements.

The student is, however, limited to such descriptions for data, since objective methods of study have not been and cannot well be devised. Behavior could be observed in the case of radical types of experience, which are now rarely found, provided the observational stage were set, which is never the case; to set the stage would doubtless estop the very phenomena desired to be observed. Such phenomena lie too deep for any accurate interpretation of behavior even if observed; the most confident experi-

<sup>1</sup> *Psychology*, pp. 118, 119.



menter would doubtless hesitate to risk an opinion as to whether a given reaction represented, for example, a sense of guilt, estrangement from God, failure to reach an ideal, social condemnation, or general depression.

However that may be, observable reactions do not constitute the heart of religious experience; they are certainly not the vital elements in experience *for the one who undergoes it*, and in religion as herein defined he is the court of last resort. This does not mean that his testimony is always scientifically accurate; it is only *personally accurate*, true for the one who gives it. At this point lies a limitation in the method, which can be avoided only by bearing in mind the distinction between experience as conceived by the person who undergoes it and as conceived by the student who views it objectively and in the light of canons the subject himself never applies, and that the present concern is with the former conception.

The intricacy of the subject should warn the investigator that mathematical certainty is neither possible nor especially desirable in this field. After all, people are people and individual differences are legion, modifying reactions of every sort in individual cases. The present chapter, therefore, will seek to indicate only the more obvious facts and general tendencies rather than to give a meticulous analysis of the emotional life.

### *Psychology of the Radical Conversion*

There is a voluminous literature on the subject of religious experience and human emotions.<sup>2</sup> Most of it

<sup>2</sup> See the following more important works: Cartwright: *Autobiography*; Bunyan: *Grace Abounding*; Edwards: *Narrative of Many Surprising Conversions*; Edwards: *Thoughts on the Revival of Religion*

is based on biographies which describe the radical conversions of the past or the experiences of mystics, hence such types have been quite thoroughly studied. The typical cataclysmic awakening, as previously stated, has three distinct stages. There is, first, the preliminary conviction period marked by a sense of guilt, unworthiness, estrangement from God, failure to measure up to an ideal, or general depression which not infrequently entails intense mental anguish and sometimes leads to suicide. In the second stage a crisis is reached and a definite change of attitude effected, sometimes as a result of voluntary effort or positive striving and in other cases by a "letting go" or a relaxation into a state of passivity, called, in the picturesque language of the earlier revival period, "casting the burden on the Lord" or "rolling the sins away." This is followed by the third stage, in which a reaction or relaxation comes; the subject feels his soul flooded with joy, peace and happiness take the place of depression, and sometimes the individual shouts aloud, leaps, clasps nearby persons, sees visions, or goes into a swoon or trance.\*

As already pointed out, the radical type of experience is declining and is no longer typical. Before passing

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*in New England; Wesley: Journal; Davenport: Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals; James: Varieties of Religious Experience; Mudge: Varieties of Adolescent Experience; Underwood: Conversion, Christian and Non-Christian; Kupky: Religious Development of Adolescents; Schou: Religion and Morbid Mental States; Coe: The Spiritual Life; Pratt: The Religious Consciousness. See also the works on the psychology of adolescence by Tracy, Hall, Peckstein and Macgregor, Mudge, and Richardson. See also the works on the psychology of religion by Stratton, Jordan, Thouless, Coe, Hickman, Starbuck, Ames, and Strickland.*

\* The writer, during his boyhood in the Ozark Mountain region, personally witnessed scores of conversions presenting all of these phenomena. The literature of the subject, cited elsewhere, describes many such cases.

from the subject, however, it is deemed advisable to throw upon the psychology of sudden transformation whatever light may be had from researches in the relation of temperament and conversion and in the pathology of religious emotionalism.

*Coe's Experiments in Hypnotism*

Coe has made valuable investigations in the relation between temperament and types of religious experience. He secured written responses from 77 persons; he then questioned the friends and associates of the respondents; and he further subjected the same subjects to hypnotic experiments. He found that striking transformations are frequent among persons in whom sensibility is predominant, but rare among persons of predominant will and intellect. Persons of sanguine (prompt-weak) and melancholic (slow-intense) temperaments are much more likely to experience conversions than those of choleric (prompt-intense) or phlegmatic (slow-weak) temperaments. "Where expectation (of conversion) is satisfied," concludes Coe, "there sensibility is distinctly predominant; but where expectation is disappointed, there intellect is just as distinctly predominant." \*

The same researches established a definite correlation between radical conversions and hallucinations and motor automatisms. Of 24 persons who had undergone striking religious transformations, 13 had also exhibited the automatic phenomena; but of 12 who had sought such a transformation in vain only 1 had experienced either sensory or motor automatism. The average of these phenomena among persons who had experienced conversion was twice as high as the general average and nearly

\* *The Spiritual Life*, p. 120.

seven times as high as the average for those who had been unable to obtain conversion.<sup>5</sup>

Coe also found that the persons experiencing conversion and the sensory and motor automatisms were of the "passive" or suggestible type while those never undergoing these experiences were "spontaneous" or nonsuggestible.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, to the suggestible group, who experienced conversion and the various automatic phenomena, belonged nearly all of those who had been healed by faith and received advance premonitions and assurances of answers to prayer.<sup>7</sup>

Thus Coe showed that "the mechanism of striking religious transformations is the same as the mechanism of our automatic mental processes."<sup>8</sup> The type of religious experience is therefore largely a matter of temperament, hence it seems as futile to expect an entire elimination of the radical type as to demand it of every person who seeks sincerely to enter the Christian way of life.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 125, 126.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 132, 133.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 127, 128.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128.

<sup>9</sup> "The cruelty unintentionally practiced upon those who desire to be disciples of Christ is, or ought to be, not a whit less revolting than the bodily mutilations prescribed by many a savage ritual. One among the persons responding to my questionnaire sought in vain for twelve years to attain what he was taught to expect; another sought for eight years, another for four or five. It clearly appears that many a consecrated soul endures a growing uncertainty and unrest concerning the favor of God. The papers show disappointment, confusion, a cloud upon the mind, reaction against the Church or even against Christianity itself. One writer came at one period of his career to conceive it as his highest ambition to prove to the world that it was possible to live a moral life irrespective of religion. That nearly all these persons finally found a more excellent way does not detract at all from the folly of the methods which brought them into suffering and antagonism. The facts cry out that we should apprehend more clearly what is essential and what incidental in religious experience." Coe: *The Spiritual Life*, p. 150.

*Pathology and Religious Emotionalism*

Certain psychologists and psychiatrists have gone beyond Coe's demonstration of the relation between temperament and religious experience, asserting that the state of nervous health is also involved and that certain elements of religious emotionalism are pathological in character.<sup>10</sup> Pathological elements in the well-known case of John Bunyan have been observed.<sup>11</sup> McDougall has pointed out the pathological character of the sin complex in persons suffering the conventional conviction for sin, which he attributes to an exaggeration of the instinct of self-abasement.<sup>12</sup>

In this field clinical data has recently been presented by a noted Danish psychiatrist and head of the hospital for nervous disease at Copenhagen, Dr. H. I. Schou. In a series of lectures at the University of Copenhagen on *Religion and Morbid Mental States* he undertook to "throw light on the relation between religious soul-life and morbid mental states by going through the principal disease groups in brief, and showing, for each group, the

<sup>10</sup> Studies are needed in the relation between types of religious experience and nervous stability but cannot be attempted herein.

<sup>11</sup> Pratt: *The Religious Consciousness*, p. 145.

<sup>12</sup> "In many cases of mental disorder the exaggerated influence of this instinct seems to determine the leading symptoms. The patient shrinks from the observation of his fellows, thinks himself a most wretched, useless, sinful creature, and, in many cases, he develops delusions of having performed various unworthy or even criminal actions; many such patients declare they are guilty of the unpardonable sin, although they attach no definite meaning to the phrase—that is to say, the patient's intellect endeavors to justify the persistent emotional state, which has no cause in his relations to his fellow-men." McDougall: *Social Psychology*, p. 68. In this description of a person in whom negative self-feeling has become pathological is easily recognizable the picture of the man suffering conviction for sin as depicted in the biographies of conversion. Guilt of the unpardonable sin is a familiar plaint therein, the subjects not realizing that their very agony was a kind of proof that they had not sinned irrecoverably, since the conscience of one so sinning would likely be so deadened that he would be little concerned about his spiritual state.

manner in which mental trouble affects the religious life of the individual.”<sup>13</sup>

Dr. Schou lays it down as “a psychiatric law that depression is followed by exaltation, or that melancholia turns to mania.”<sup>14</sup> He finds so close a correspondence between the radical conversion, with its sudden transition from depression to joy, and a diseased nervous state, that he warns the clergy against it: “If I had to cite a field in which the priest is particularly liable to be misled,” he writes, “and where, too, even the practised psychiatrist may find it difficult to determine what is genuine and what is the reverse, it would be the cases of sudden conversion which occur among young people who have for some time previously been depressed and self-reproachful and conscious of sin”;<sup>15</sup> “view with some scepticism and timely reserve all sudden conversions occurring after long periods of depression.”<sup>16</sup>

This physician<sup>17</sup> points out that hysterical persons “are especially inclined to sudden and unexpected conversions and abrupt religious awakenings.”<sup>18</sup> He declares depression and conviction to be marks of a pathological condition, self-reproach being the “central point” and “predominant symptom” of pathological melancholia;<sup>19</sup> on the basis of clinical records he describes the symptoms of this disease in the exact words of the tradi-

<sup>13</sup> Schou: *Religion and Morbid Mental States*, trans. into English by W. Worster, M. A., and published by the Century Co., N. Y., 1926.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 62, 63.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 145.

<sup>17</sup> Supporting, of course, his assertions with clinical data. It should be said that Schou is a religious man leaning to the traditional orthodoxy and therefore writes with full sympathy. His lectures were delivered to young clergymen.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 180, 181.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

tional conversion biographies,<sup>20</sup> concluding with advice to the Church similar to that voiced by Coe, namely, that no demand should be made for a uniform spiritual experience.<sup>21</sup>

### *The Findings of Starbuck*

Turning from the psychology of the extremer forms of religious emotionalism to more representative types of awakening, the procedure will be to set forth the findings of the empirical studies of Starbuck, so frequently referred to herein. Starbuck presented the most elaborate and definite analysis of the whole range of religious emotions in awakening ever made. This author delved into the motives leading to conversion, finding social pressure or urging to be the most prominent, being present in 19 per cent of the cases; the other motives in order of their prominence were as follows: following out a moral ideal, 17 per cent; remorse, conviction for sin, etc., 16 per cent; fear of death or hell, 14 per cent; example, imitation, 13 per cent; response to teaching, 10 per cent; other self-regarding motives, 6 per cent; altruistic motives, 5 per cent.

Starbuck even plotted a curve showing the frequency of the various motives for different years. The self-regarding line began at eleven years, its modal age, dropped without a break to sixteen, rose sharply to

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 29-32.

<sup>21</sup> "The Church has generally favored the psychopathic and underestimated what was ordinary and straight-forward. The Church should always bear in mind that certain persons, by virtue of their whole psychic construction are altogether debarred from certain forms of religious experience. It is therefore altogether unfair to demand the same religious experience in all, for the psychic disposition differs greatly in different persons, and their religious experiences must therefore differ accordingly." *Ibid.*, p. 215.

eighteen, and then dropped suddenly and disappeared at the nineteenth year. This was almost exactly contradicted by the line for the altruistic and moral ideal motives, which began at ten and constantly ascended until it touched the mode at nineteen. The line for conviction for sin began at the low point at the tenth year, rose constantly to the mode at fourteen, then dropped without a break and disappeared at eighteen.<sup>22</sup> With similar definiteness Starbuck tabulated motives and purposes in his non-conversion cases.<sup>23</sup>

Proceeding to an analysis of the "mental and bodily affections" of his subjects immediately preceding conversion, Starbuck set forth his data in the form of the following table showing the percentage of the various mental and bodily affections preceding conversion: <sup>24</sup>

Sense of Sin .....	33
Feeling of Estrangement from God.....	24
Desire for Better Life.....	18
Depression, Sadness, Pensiveness.....	70
Restlessness, Anxiety, Uncertainty.....	41
Helplessness, Humility.....	11
Earnestness, Seriousness.....	8
Prayer, Calling on God.....	45
Tendency to Resist Conviction.....	41
Doubts, Questionings.....	9
Loss of Sleep or Appetite.....	27
Nervousness .....	6
Weeping .....	7
Affection of Sight.....	5
Affection of Hearing.....	4
Affection of Touch.....	13

Starbuck similarly analyzed the feelings of his respondents immediately following conversion, the results being expressed in the following table showing the percent-

<sup>22</sup> *The Psychology of Religion*, Ch. IV.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, Ch. XXVII.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, Ch. V.



ages of some characteristic feelings following conversion: <sup>25</sup>

Joy .....	44
Bodily Lightness .....	19
Weeping, Shouting.....	18
Peace .....	37
Happiness .....	31
Relief .....	16
Load lifted from Body or Heart.....	8
Acceptance and Oneness with God or Christ.....	33
Calm, Subdued.....	7
Struggle, Sense of Responsibility.....	10
Partial Disappointment .....	18

### *Comparison of Contemporary Data*

Although Starbuck's statistical treatment of his data is suggestive and valuable in indicating general tendencies, it is felt that the nature of the material scarcely justified such definite conclusions as he attempted to draw from them. The testimony of persons untrained in introspection as to the motives by which they were actuated in moments of stress and emotional disturbance can hardly be trusted to the extent of producing a reliable curve of motives. On the basis of such testimony it is also doubtful whether reliance can be placed in such fine distinctions as those between "depression, sadness, pensiveness" and "restlessness, anxiety, uncertainty" or between "joy," "peace," "happiness" and relief." <sup>26</sup>

In the present study, therefore, no such careful discriminations will be attempted, only the larger aspects and most obvious features of religious emotions being

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, Ch. IX.

<sup>26</sup> Coe, while commending Starbuck's general handling of data, remarks that "his numerical tabulation of emotions, motives, and the like shows nothing more than general drifts present in unknown proportions." *The Psychology of Religion*, 47n.

dealt with. Such comparisons as are made will be only in general terms.

### *Sensory and Motor Reflexes*

As might be expected from the character of the persons whose reactions are being studied, the present data offer no basis for the study of pathological emotionalism. It has already been shown that the more radical religious awakenings are declining in number, while such as remain are much reduced in the intensity of the cataclysm as compared with the cases described in the literature previously cited.

In his examination of 77 persons Coe found that 20 had exhibited hallucinations and motor automatisms.<sup>27</sup> The present data reveal nothing even approaching so large a proportion of such phenomena; they are so rare as to be nearly non-existent among contemporary persons.<sup>28</sup> The nearest approach to these experiences are the following cases:

*Case 64.* Age 25 (M). My first experience was in the nature of a formless vision, a sort of great light which came while I was sitting writing letters on the porch of a boat-house. It seemed perfectly natural, and left me with the impression of the attractiveness of Christ.

*Case 558.* Age 38 (F). When I was about six or seven years old, it chanced one afternoon we were having an entertainment in which a little girl recited a piece in which the word "Jesus" occurred. I did not know anything about this Person or who He was, but every time the word was men-

<sup>27</sup> *The Spiritual Life*, p. 125.

<sup>28</sup> No direct inquiry was made but in describing emotions it seems that such striking phenomena would have been mentioned had they been present. It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between actual automatisms and figures of speech, as when Coe lists as a hallucination the statement that "an inner voice was heard."

tioned a most unusual thrill went through me, and I kept saying the word over and over reverently to myself. Then I began to tremble perceptibly and must have acted foolish for somebody said, "What's the matter with you?" I made no reply but rushed out of the audience and hid myself in the barn, and kept repeating the wonderful word and wishing I knew what it meant.

*Case 2262.* Age 30 (M. Negro). I felt a peculiar movement about my heart which I called "a wheel turning in my heart." This feeling lasted for five minutes. It seemed as if I was pumped full of something resembling air.

*Case 66.* Age 34 (M). I was carried outside my body. Time, body and space seemed to recede. I had nothing to do with them. My spirit rose to such fearful heights that I should have died if the experience had lasted longer. I saw God, and it seemed his holiness scared me and about four hours later I came back to earth. This was not the experience of a fanatic, but I find it impossible to crowd into words anything of what happened. When I say I saw God I mean it. To put it better, I knew afterwards what happened to Moses at the Burning Bush.

A comparison of these cases of automatisms with the trances, shoutings, leaping, and "jerks" figuring so prominently in the revivals of the Kentucky wilderness<sup>20</sup> will show how great has been the subsidence of such phenomena.

### *The Revival Influence*

The revival was once the accepted method of securing converts and recruiting the membership of the evangelical denominations. Its methods were essentially the

<sup>20</sup> See Cartwright: *Autobiography*, for descriptions of many such cases. He reports, for example, that a man's neck was broken by the "jerks"; another, attempting to avoid the "jerks" by seizing a sapling, was lifted from his feet and whirled around the tree, twisting the bark therefrom.

methods of hypnotism, which in the hands of a skilled revivalist proved effective in securing the converts desired.<sup>30</sup> The revival is still extensively used, but the present data indicate its ineffectiveness in bringing about religious awakening.

In the universe of 2174 persons studied 399, or 18.4 per cent of the whole, reported their experiences as having occurred at a revival; 142, or 6.5 per cent, underwent an awakening at a regular Church service; 66, or 3 per cent, at other places.<sup>31</sup> Among the Definite Crisis awakenings 40.6 per cent occurred at revivals and 13.3 per cent at ordinary Church services.

The place of awakening for the various groups may be seen from the following table:<sup>32</sup>

GROUP	REVIVAL	SERVICE	ELSEWHERE
Total .....	18.4	6.5	3.0
Definite Crisis.....	40.6	13.3	19.6
Stern Theology.....	36.4	30.7	9.7
Confirmation .....	1.5	5.3	8.0
Poor Home Training.....	21.4	5.6	4.7
Above 40.....	24.7	8.6	11.1
Negroes .....	12.1	21.2	7.6
Irregular Sunday School.....	25.4	5.4	6.2
Religious Workers.....	24.9	5.6	6.8

Percentage table showing place of awakening for various groups

### *Emotions Preceding Awakening*

All the respondents in the present study were asked to describe their experiences at the time of religious awak-

<sup>30</sup> For a discussion of revival methods and psychology see Pratt: *The Religious Consciousness*, Ch. IX.

<sup>31</sup> Only 607 individuals reported on the place of awakening, however.

<sup>32</sup> The number not specifying the place can be determined by the discrepancies in the percentages. For comparison, recall Starbuck's report that one-half the females and one-third the males of his conversions cases were converted in connection with revivals: *The Psychology of Religion*, p. 25.

enings and were guided in such descriptions by a series of questions especially designed to bring out the facts desired without suggesting the nature of the answers,<sup>33</sup> the object being to get spontaneous reactions without reference to methods of classification.

A study of the records shows that the emotions immediately preceding the experiences which the respondents regard as religious awakenings fall into seven general categories, which have been called the sense of sin, depression, moral responsibility, weeping, fear, and slight emotion. These classes are defined and illustrated below:

1. The sense of sin category includes all those who felt themselves guilty and underwent the conventional conviction experience. The following are typical examples:

*Case 122.* Age 18 (F). When I was thirteen years old I began to feel that I was lost in sin and that if I gave my life to God I would be saved.

*Case 153.* Age 18 (F). For some time there had been a fight as to my life work. I thought that Christ was calling me but I steadfastly refused. After hearing a sermon on "Filling your place," I felt repentant. I realized the burden of my sin and cried in agony for peace.

*Case 157.* Age 18 (F). Up until three years ago I didn't realize what sin was. My mother had talked to me all my

<sup>33</sup> Those who claimed conversion were guided by the following questions: "Have you ever undergone the experience commonly called conversion? When? Where? Describe the circumstances and your feelings leading up to the experience. Describe the experience itself and your feelings during and immediately following it. What were the immediate after effects of the experience?" The non-conversion or growth group were asked: "If you did not have a definite conversion experience, when did you become aware that you were religious? What were your feelings and what did it mean to you when you first realized that you were religious? Describe the process by which you consciously became religious."

life about living a pure Christian life. One night after coming home from preaching my sins and wrong doings seemed to stare me in the face.

*Case 220.* Age 20 (F). I felt different from what I had ever felt before. I realized my sins and wished to lift a burden off my heart in some way.

These examples are all taken from the experiences of young women in whose biographies there appears nothing to indicate any unusual moral faults, the sense of sin apparently having been induced by teaching and environment. It will be noted, however, that the sense of guilt herein expressed is mild as compared to the cases appearing in the older literature on the subject.

2. The depression category includes the cases undergoing an uneasiness, depression, or nameless suffering in which no element of guilt enters. Some representative records are quoted below.

*Case 12.* Age 23 (M). For some time I had been aware of a lack of Christ and a Christian spirit in my heart. I had become aware that I was wasting my life, and that thought continually grew on me. My heart was filled with conviction.

*Case 64.* Age 25 (M). The general feelings were dissatisfaction, sense of futility and failure, worry over choice of a profession.

*Case 347.* Age 23 (M). An inward feeling of despondency, wondering if it was worth while after all.

*Case 363.* Age 50 (F). I was very miserable all the way home. I couldn't sleep. I had a great desire to be a Christian. I knew I wasn't one.

3. Those individuals are placed in the moral category who, without having a definite conviction for sin, felt they were not as good as they should be or that they

had in some measure failed to measure up to a moral ideal.

*Case 4.* Age 20 (F). I felt that more than anything else I wanted to be a follower of Christ, and to be like my father and mother.

*Case 13.* Age 19 (M). I felt at the time that I had sinned and wanted to live a different life.

*Case 201.* Age 23 (F). I felt that the Christian life was the only one worth while and that I really wanted to live one.

4. Responsibility means that the individual concerned felt an obligation which rendered the religious acceptance necessary or desirable; frequently this responsibility was connected with some other person to whom the respondent might be a stumbling block, at other times the obligation being more individual or moral in character. Some typical cases are the following:

*Case 8.* Age 22 (F). I felt that as a Christian there were responsibilities I must assume, and began wondering just what my calling in life was, and just what Jesus would have me do with my life.

*Case 62.* Age 35 (M). That it was a duty which I owed to both God and my fellowman, that I take a definite stand for Christ.

*Case 302.* Age 27 (M). I had tried to live a Christian life but was not satisfied. I knew I had not fully surrendered to Christ. I felt I ought to study for the ministry but fought it. I prayed—went to bed—couldn't sleep—began to pray again.

5. While a category has been made to include the cases of weeping, it is recognized that tears are but manifestations of a deep emotion and that such cases might well be included in one or more of the other classifications, usually that containing the "slight emotion" experiences later to be mentioned. Weeping is rare in the records but occasionally appears.

*Case 353.* Age 43 (M). I remember a distinct desire to be good from earliest recollection but felt that I was not good. I was sorry for the disobediences, improper language, petty thefts and fights of boyhood days. Felt I was not ready to die. Distinctly remember some sleepless hours because I had stolen some plums from a neighbour. One Sunday morning as our pastor was preaching, I wept. He asked me and several others "forward for prayers" and I was converted that morning.

*Case 661.* Age 34 (M). The people had returned from a baptismal service at the river; I felt somewhat depressed because I was not among the number added to the church; I was affected by the sermon; a friend, my Sunday School teacher, spoke to me in the audience about accepting Christ; I shed tears of grief and sadness, feeling myself lost; a great burden seemed to bear me down; I prayed for forgiveness, imagining myself to be kneeling at the foot of the cross; I seemed to come to the end of my own strength and felt that I was willing to make a complete surrender of myself and my life if only I could find relief and peace.

6. As illustrations of cases in which the religious awakening was accompanied by fear, either of death, hell, God or simply a nameless dread, the following may be cited:

*Case 329.* Age 31 (M). This realization was accompanied by keen sense of right and wrong. On the one hand was sort of an ecstatic idealism, and on the other was a fear of the hell which I had seen so vividly portrayed at revival meetings. These things served to give me a deep concern, while my thoughts and emotions were directed by the customary practices and teaching of the community.

*Case 339.* Age 31 (M). First, a feeling of depression. Sin weighing on conscience. Eternal calamity, if choice not made right—eternal exclusion from fellowship with God.

7. Finally, a category seemed necessary for a group of cases in which the adolescent ferment produced a name-



less emotion of a general character which possessed religious significance to the person experiencing it. Examples are as follows:

*Case 334.* Age 26 (F). First, I had been emotionally upset and overwrought at a regular out of door camp meeting while visiting friends. That only antagonized me but a year later Billy Sunday came to our city and many of my school friends and myself were stirred by his appeal. Soon afterwards, as a direct result of Billy Sunday, this unusual conversion experience came to me in a Quaker meeting. It was rather sudden and unexpected but sincere.

*Case 343.* Age 32 (M). I remember now that my feelings were warmed and tendered. I think that a consciousness of a Father's love and the friendship of Jesus were the most vital features of this experience. Along with it there was a new incentive for "being" good, not much as I can remember for "doing" good.

*Case 503.* Age 59 (M). I was aware that for several months my parents, pastor and S. S. teacher had been anxious about me, were praying for me, etc. While this made me reflect, it also raised revolt within me and made me resist what I knew in my heart was my duty and would lead to joy.

The above classifications have been made for ease in interpreting the data and are general in nature. Overlapping occurs in many cases and not infrequently the case under consideration belongs and has been placed in two or more categories. The nature of the data is such that general trends only can be sought with confidence.

### *Prevalency of Preceding Emotions*

In considering the prevalency of the various phases of religious emotionalism, an outstanding fact is that all are absent in a majority of the cases; 1566 individuals, 72 per cent of the whole number studied, experienced no

emotions sufficiently striking to possess significance in the process of religious awakening. The absence of emotions might be expected in the case of those persons undergoing the Gradual type of awakening; the universe of cases without emotion, however, is larger than the Gradual group, indicating that many of those who look back to a definite event passed through it without an upheaval. Most of these are in the Emotional Stimulus group, although six such uneventful awakenings are of the Definite Crisis type.

Here is found another verification of the fact to which reference has so frequently been made, namely, that the trend in the phenomena of religious awakening is definitely in the direction of eliminating the emotional experiences.

Turning to the most characteristic element of the older type of conversion, the preliminary conviction for sin, the data show that this was experienced by 184 persons, or 8.5 per cent of the total group. This is in marked contrast to the findings of Starbuck, which showed the sense of sin in 33 per cent of his cases. In Chapter IV it was shown that the older theology tended to produce the conviction phenomena, and also that such theology is disappearing; in the disappearance of the conviction experiences there is a verification of the thesis previously defended and a reflection of the milder type of theology now prevalent.

A further verification of the above-mentioned thesis lies in the fact that the percentage of convictions mounts to the highest figure, excepting only the Definite Crisis group, among those who heard the stern theology; 35.2 per cent of these felt a sense of sin, a proportion four times as great as the average for the total group. The

phenomenon is similarly high among all the groups which depart appreciably from the ideals of the modern view of the purpose of religious education. The poor home training group shows 10.3 per cent of conviction cases; the group above 40 years of age, 33.3 per cent; negroes, among whom stern theology and Definite Crisis awakenings run relatively high, 24.2 per cent; irregular Sunday School attendants, 19.2 per cent; religious workers, who also show a high percentage of stern theology and radical awakenings, 18.5 per cent. True to previous findings, however, the confirmation group, with low percentages in the columns mentioned, report 2.3 per cent of conviction experiences, about one-fourth the average for the total group.

All of these facts are brought out in the following table:

GROUP	CONVICTIONS
Total .....	8.5
Starbuck's .....	33.0
Definite Crisis .....	55.2
Stern Theology .....	35.2
Confirmation .....	2.3
Poor Home Training...	10.3
Above 40 Years . . . . .	33.3
Negroes .....	24.2
Irregular Sunday School. . . . .	19.2
Religious Workers.....	18.5

Percentage table showing prevalence of conviction for sin among various groups

A comparison of the present data with those of Starbuck with respect to other emotions prevalent in religious awakening shows that in every case emotionalism is declining; this can safely be said, although the difference in categories makes a definite numerical comparison difficult or impossible. Starbuck found "depression, sadness, pensiveness" present in 70 per cent of his records; the

data herein studied show but 5 per cent of depression experiences; even if the slight emotion cases be added, or all other emotional reactions combined, for that matter, the total does not even approach the frequency of this type of experience in Starbuck's group. Starbuck found that 7 per cent of his respondents wept; contemporary data report only 1.5 per cent. It is not necessary to arrange coincident categories or to unduly press the statistics to draw the conclusion that emotion immediately preceding religious awakening has been much reduced during the last generation.

The following table will show the prevalence of the different types of emotion preceding awakening among the various groups being studied:

GROUP	SENSE OF SIN		DEPRESSION		RESPONSIBILITY		WEeping		FEAR		SLIGHT EMOTION		NONE
Total .....	184	109	81	23	33	36	224	1566					
	8.5	5.	3.7	1.1	1.5	1.7	10.3	72.					
Definite Crisis .....	79	44	7	7	11	15	22	6					
	55.2	30.8	4.9	4.9	7.7	10.5	15.4	4.2					
Stern Theology .....	62	29	9	3	11	16	29	58					
	35.2	16.5	5.1	1.7	6.3	9.1	16.5	33.					
Confirmation .....	3	3	1	1	1	2	2	124					
	2.3	2.3	.8	.8	.8	1.5	1.5	93.3					
Poor Home Training....	24	20	5	3	6	5	23	156					
	10.3	8.5	2.1	1.3	2.6	2.1	9.8	66.7					
Above 40 Years of Age..	27	13	5	1	3	4	8	30					
	33.3	16.	6.2	1.2	3.7	4.9	9.9	37.					
Negroes .....	16	12	2	..	1	1	13	24					
	24.2	18.2	3.	..	1.5	1.5	19.7	36.4					
Irregular Sunday School.	25	12	8	4	1	4	13	70					
	19.2	9.2	6.2	3.1	.8	3.1	10.	53.8					
Religious Workers.....	106	52	25	11	15	17	68	337					
	18.5	9.1	4.4	1.9	2.6	3.	11.8	57.7					

Percentage table showing prevalence of different emotions immediately preceding religious awakening among various groups

### *Emotions Following Awakening*

Turning to a study of the emotional reactions at the time of and immediately following the event which is

regarded as marking religious awakening, it is found that such reactions may be classified in five general categories, which have been called joy and peace, relaxation, moral, responsibility, and work.

1. The sense of joy, peace, or happiness which follows the definite religious experience is well understood; in the older conversions it was a characteristic nearly always present, as the literature already cited will show, and frequently gave rise to extreme motor manifestations. The experiences revealed in the present data are mild, as the following typical illustrations will show:

*Case 326.* Age 23 (M). Simply a happiness and confidence in Christ.

*Case 201.* Age 23 (F). I felt happy to know I had made a decision that meant everything to me.

*Case 401.* Age 34 (M). Peace and joy came upon public profession.

*Case 655.* Age 31 (M). Instantly there came an untold joy into my heart that is best expressed in that I loved everybody and everything. I ran to my mother, as she was still praying when I opened the door, and threw my arms about her neck and told her the Lord converted me. I then felt so joyful, I hastened outside the house where my father was engaged and told him similar words.

2. In the cases of relaxation the joy is not so marked but there seems to be a definite sense of relief following a period of strain or restlessness, sometimes described by such figures as "the burden was lifted," or "I felt my sins were rolled away." Examples are as follows:

*Case 555.* Age 46 (M). It was as if a load has been lifted. The relief cannot be described. It was night but the stars seemed brighter when I went out.

*Case 652.* Age 22 (F). I burst out into tears and fairly ran to take his hand. There seemed to be a breaking of some

great tension and I simply sobbed. I had always been emotional. Afterwards I felt as if some great load had been lifted and I simply walked on air. I went singing around home, feeling that I need no longer worry.

3. The moral type of reaction brings a feeling that a new ideal has been formed and must be lived up to or that the individual must now live a better life in conformity with higher moral principles. Such cases are as follows:

*Case 202.* (F). I felt that I was starting life anew.

*Case 327.* Age 28 (M). There was really a repentance. I was sorrowful for not having made the decision sooner; was glad to have the opportunity and to take my stand for Christ. I wanted to join the Church and do the things I was told a Christian should do.

4. At times the religious awakening brought a sense of increased responsibility for the welfare of others, for better living, or for achievement. This may be seen from the following examples:

*Case 403.* Age 21 (M). I felt that I must go to work trying to give others the benefit of my experience.

*Case 502.* Age 20 (M). From that day to this, I have felt a sense of responsibility, and when I made the promise to live and serve as He had, my life always seemed bent on certain services.

*Case 904.* Age 18 (M). I began to feel a new responsibility, hopes began to brighten, I saw a new future.

*Case 905.* Age 31 (M). I felt a great responsibility and sense of need. It meant the living of a life above reproach as far as I possibly could.

*Case 907.* Age 25 (M). I felt that there was a great responsibility on me to help others. I wanted to live a life that would show religion. I wanted to live my religion as well as practice it.

5. By work is meant the reaction of immediate activity on behalf of the religion so newly realized. Frequently it takes the form of seeking to lead another person into the religious experience and at other times a definite type of vocation is entered. As illustrations of the type the following cases are cited:

*Case 401.* Age 34 (M). Joy and a desire to be useful. Anxious not to be a stumbling block.

*Case 228.* Age 18 (F). After I had given my heart to God, I felt like I wanted to go out and tell everybody and bring them to Christ, and I did bring my oldest brother.

*Case 229.* Age 19 (F). I felt as if I must do something good for some one all the time. I spoke to girl friends who were not Christians and persuaded them to be Christians.

*Case 230.* Age 18 (F). I felt as if I would like to do some great missionary work, to try to influence others to become Christians.

### *Prevalency of Following Emotions*

As in the case of previous emotions, the outstanding fact appearing from the study of emotional reactions immediately following religious awakening is that all types are absent in more than two-thirds of all the cases, 1486 individuals, 68.4 per cent of the whole number, reporting that no such phenomena were experienced. Uneventful experiences are most numerous (84.5 per cent) among the confirmation group, the poor home training (66.3 per cent), religious workers (53.3 per cent), irregular Sunday School (47.7 per cent), persons above 40 years (39.5 per cent), stern theology (35.2 per cent), negroes (34.8 per cent), and Definite Crisis (1.4 per cent) groups following in order.

Just as the phenomenon of conviction for sin was the characteristic element of the older conversion experience,

so the sense of joy was its typical succeeding emotion. It was present in the contemporary records more frequently than any other emotion, although experienced by only 308 individuals, or 14.2 per cent of the whole group. The fact that Starbuck found it in 44 per cent of his cases indicates a considerable decline in this characteristic experience since his studies were made.

As in the case of conviction for sin as a previous emotion, the data show that the percentage of persons undergoing the typical reaction after the event regarded as religious awakening rises among the groups departing from the modern ideal of religious awakening; the only exception is in the case of the poor home training group, the statistics for which are practically the same as for the total. Of the 143 persons reporting the Definite Crisis awakening, 79, or 55.2 per cent, passed through a conviction period while 82, or 57.3 per cent, experienced joy following the crisis. Joy was also felt by 34.7 per cent of those hearing the stern theology, 40.7 per cent of those above 40 years of age, 24.2 per cent of the negroes, 24.6 per cent of the irregular Sunday School attendants, and 23.3 per cent of the religious workers. The following table summarizes these facts and includes Starbuck's findings for comparison:

GROUP	JOYFUL REACTIONS
Total .....	14.2
Starbuck's .....	44.0
Definite Crisis.....	57.3
Stern Theology.....	34.7
Confirmation .....	4.5
Poor Home Training.....	14.5
Above 40 .....	40.7
Negroes .....	24.2
Irregular Sunday School.....	24.6
Religious Workers.....	23.3

Percentage table showing number of joyful reactions following religious awakening for various groups



If Starbuck's "relief" cases are comparable to the "relaxation" experiences of the present study a reduction in the number of such phenomena is apparent, since Starbuck's data shows 16 per cent while the records herein investigated report 9.6 per cent. The two sets of data as analyzed scarcely warrant further comparisons. It seems safe, however, to draw here the same conclusion that has so clearly appeared elsewhere, namely, that the tendency is toward a reduction of emotional experiences, both in the actual number of such experiences and in the intensity of those still occurring.

An analysis of the data of the present study with reference to the emotions immediately following religious awakening results in the table given below:

SOURCE	JOY-	RELAX-	RESPONSI-			
	PEACE	ATION	MORAL	BILITY	WORK	NONE
Total .....	308	208	131	24	56	1486
	14.2	9.6	6.0	1.1	3.0	68.4
Definite Crisis.....	82	68	16	5	14	2
	57.3	47.6	11.2	3.5	9.8	1.4
Stern Theology .....	61	51	13	3	9	62
	34.7	29.0	7.4	1.7	5.1	35.2
Confirmation .....	6	..	3	..	..	119
	4.5	..	2.4	..	..	84.5
Poor Home Training...	34	32	14	.1	3	155
	14.5	13.7	6.0	.4	1.3	66.3
Above 40 Years of Age	33	20	5	..	1	32
	40.7	24.7	6.2	..	1.2	39.5
Negroes .....	16	16	12	1	1	23
	24.2	24.2	18.2	1.5	1.5	34.8
Irregular Sunday School	32	21	13	5	3	62
	24.6	16.2	10.0	3.8	2.3	47.7
Religious Workers ....	134	94	39	10	27	306
	23.3	16.4	6.8	1.7	4.7	53.3

Table showing number and percentage of emotions following religious awakening for various groups

## CHAPTER VIII

### MODERN TRENDS IN RELIGIOUS AWAKENING

IN the preceding chapters an attempt has been made to analyze and impartially study the religious experiences of a considerable number of contemporary persons, believed to constitute a representative cross section of the intelligent Protestant population. As the study proceeded some comparisons were made with earlier investigations in the same field and certain conclusions were pointed out.

In the present chapter it is proposed to bring together in summary all the more obvious findings, to briefly and generally evaluate them in their relation to religious education, and to point out certain observable trends in individual religious experience.

#### *Summary of Emergent Facts*

A brief recapitulation of the outstanding facts emerging in the previous chapters will afford a composite view of the present status of individual religious experience in the United States.

Speaking quite generally, the data show that three types of awakening are now prevalent: the Definite Crisis type, in which a real emotional crisis is passed; the Gradual, in which religion dawns by a developmental process unaccompanied by significant upheavals; and the Emotional Stimulus, which occupies a median position,

being essentially gradual in that little or no change of attitude is effected, yet the subject regards some specific event as the beginning of the religious consciousness. Only the first type can be well compared with the traditional conversion.

An analysis shows that 6.7 per cent of contemporary religious persons experienced the Definite Crisis type of awakening, 27.2 per cent the Emotional Stimulus, and 66.1 per cent the Gradual. Among males the Definite Crisis type is more prevalent than among females, 14.7 per cent as against 2.5 per cent, the reverse being true of the Gradual cases in the ratio of 57.7 per cent among males and 71 per cent among females.

The modal period for religious awakening is from the tenth to the fourteenth year, both the actual mode and the mean coinciding in the twelfth year. Twelve is the mode in every group segregated from the total with the single exception of the males of the Definite Crisis group, in whose cases the mode is seventeen and eighteen.

When these facts are compared with the findings of previous studies they indicate that during the last thirty years the age of religious awakening has been lowered from fifteen to twelve, except for the Definite Crisis males, in whose cases it has remained stationary or perhaps been raised somewhat.

Since other phases of the study show that stern theology and faulty religious education tend to produce the Definite Crisis experience, the data at this point tend to indicate that religious education and a moderate type of preaching bring about an earlier adoption of the religious attitude and add three years or more to the conscious religious life and activity of the individual.

In the matter of the stern theology, featuring such

ideas as total depravity, hell, and damnation, the data indicate its decline; it was heard by 29.6 per cent of the persons above 40 years of age and by only 9.8 per cent of the total group and 8 per cent of the white persons under forty.

This change in the type of theology preached to the people is a factor in the elimination of the Definite Crisis awakenings, since such theology tends to induce radical emotional experiences; this appears from the fact that while radical upheavals occurred in only 2.3 per cent of the confirmation group, who had never been taught to seek or expect conversion, and 6.7 per cent of the total, they were present in 34.6 per cent of the stern theology cases, 35.8 per cent of the cases above forty, and 25.8 per cent of the negroes, 15.8 per cent of whom heard the stern theology. That is to say, in every grouping wherein the percentage of stern theology is high the percentage of Definite Crisis experiences is also high.

Practically all contemporary religious persons had some previous training in religion, either in home or Sunday School, or both. In only 265 cases, 12.7 per cent of the whole, can the home training in religion be called good; in 1603, or 73.7 per cent, it was fair and in 234, or 10.7 per cent, poor or practically absent. The regular attendants at Sunday School number 2025, or 93.1 per cent of the whole group, only 130 attending irregularly. There are 51 individuals who had little or no previous religious training in either home or Sunday School.

A further study of these cases shows that the lack of religious training causes an increase in Definite Crisis awakenings. While only 6.7 per cent of all the persons experienced such awakenings, they were undergone by

13.4 per cent of those with poor home training, 25.4 per cent of the irregular Sunday School attendants, and 31.4 per cent of those belonging in both categories.

The outstanding evidence of the present data, appearing in almost every group and phase of study, seems to be that the tendency in the matter of religious awakening is in the direction of smoothing experience and eliminating the radical emotional upheavals. That religious training is in large measure responsible for this seems clearly indicated by the facts above mentioned.

Stern theology and irregular Sunday School attendance are more prevalent in the country and villages than in towns and cities, which situation is reflected in more Definite Crisis and fewer Gradual experiences in the rural sections. Home training in religion, however, is better in the open country and villages, the country home maintaining itself as a religious agency with greater efficiency than the country church.

The sons and daughters of ministers and missionaries show a relatively larger number of both Definite Crisis and Gradual experiences. Such persons are relatively well trained in religion and the high percentage of Definite Crisis cases is an exception to the general run of the findings. There is also an increase in the number of Gradual experiences, 73.1 per cent of these occurring among persons of ministerial parentage as against 66.1 per cent for the total group. Among these persons the smoothing has taken place among the Emotional Stimulus group; the explanation is perhaps that the more careful and sympathetic guidance enabled these individuals to better interpret their experiences, hence they attached less significance to emotional reactions which others regarded as determinative.

Persons who enter religious vocations come in relatively larger numbers from the open country and villages, and from the homes of farmers and religious workers. They show more Definite Crisis and fewer Gradual awakenings than the average for the total group. In every grouping made, with the single exceptions of the negroes, an increase above the norm in the number of Definite Crisis awakenings shows also an increase in the number of ministers and missionaries coming from the group in question.

As previously mentioned, the members of the confirmation group of Churches—Episcopalian, Lutheran, and Roman Catholic—show the smallest proportion of Definite Crisis awakenings and the highest percentage of Gradual cases. Among the so-called evangelical denominations the Baptists have most Definite Crisis and fewest Gradual cases; the Methodists occupy the middle position in both regards; while the Presbyterians have fewest Definite Crisis and most Gradual experiences.

In all the evangelical denominations, there are more Definite Crisis cases in the North than in the South. There are also more Gradual cases in the North.

A study of the emotions attending religious awakening reveals facts in accord with other phases of the study, namely, that emotions are much reduced in intensity and tend to disappear entirely as determining factors. Among all the persons studied, 1566, or 72 per cent, experienced no emotions previous to religious awakening. The conviction of sin phenomenon, so characteristic of the older radical conversions, was found in only 184, or 8.5 per cent, of the cases; in 109, or 5 per cent, there was a period of general depression and in 224, or 10.3 per cent, an

emotion of a general or indefinite character preceding the events regarded by the subjects as the dawning of the religious consciousness.

Relatively few persons experienced any definite emotional reactions immediately following religious awakening; 1486, or 68.4 per cent, report no such phenomena. The most characteristic emotions appearing are a sense of joy or peace (308 cases, 14.2 per cent), a general sense of relief or relaxation (208 cases, 9.6 per cent), and a new sense of morality or striving to live better (131 cases, 6 per cent). The older phenomena of shouting, visions, and other motor and sensory reflexes, are practically non-existent.

### *Gains for Religious Education*

In the analysis of the records in hand, care has been exercised to maintain the scientific attitude, only the most obvious facts being deduced in order to avoid pressing the data. It is felt, however, that in attempting an application of the facts to the modern program of religious education there is justified a somewhat wider liberty than has hitherto been permitted, although, as previously, only the larger aspects of the problem will be given consideration.

In the first place, the facts indicate that at least some of the aims of religious education are being realized. The decline of the dogma of total depravity, whether or not *caused* by religious education, has at least redounded to its advantage, since this dogma stood opposed to the principle of development which is fundamental to religious education. The same may be said of the decline of such other features of the stern theology as based the appeal to childhood on fear or tended to cultivate the

spirit of morbidity. In the removal of an opposing philosophy the ground has been prepared for religious education, which accordingly faces an opportunity and a testing.

The dawning of the religious consciousness by a process of development has been one of the outstanding aims of religious education since Horace Bushnell laid down his thesis that "the child is to grow up a Christian and never know himself as being otherwise."<sup>1</sup> It figures in most of the definitions and statements of purpose of religious education.<sup>2</sup> The data studied indicate that a considerable step has been taken toward the realization of that aim: the tendency is definitely toward the gradual and away from the cataclysmic experience; two-thirds of the persons studied, all of whom had some kind of previous religious training, became religious gradually; while an even larger proportion, perhaps nine-tenths, were never really irreligious.

Again, it has been shown that experience can be modified by environment and that within limits any desirable type of experience can be secured by appropriate changes in the stimuli presented to the minds of the young. This has long been a fundamental principle of general education, and its definite transference to the field of religion provides for religious education the same psychological justification which general education has long enjoyed. Facing the fact that the individual is educable in religion and that his experience will be determined by the nature of the stimuli presented in his earlier years, those who believe in religion as a desirable factor in character can

<sup>1</sup> *Christian Nurture*, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, the definitions of Betts, Stout, and Coe, referred to in Chapter V.



hardly escape the duty of making religious education supreme.

Herein also lies a challenge. Since the modifications revealed by the present study were induced by a relatively haphazard training, it seems clear that developments of a far-reaching character can be secured by a thoroughly efficient system of religious education.

From all this there emerge two problems which religious education must face: (1) What is the desirable type of religious experience? (2) What stimuli are best designed to produce that type? The present data offer no answers to these problems, nor can such be attempted here. Nevertheless the problems press for solution. Owing to the personal factors involved it is, of course, neither desirable nor possible to establish definite norms and press the consciousness of God into prearranged patterns, but in view of the psychological make-up and social obligations of the individual it should be possible to throw some light upon the general type of experience best adapted to the proper motivation of his conduct, relations, and attitudes.

### *Dangers of Religious Education*

Facts emerging from the present study, as well as certain trends noticeable in the general situation, seem to indicate some possible dangers in the program of religious education to which attention may well be directed.

In the first place, the decline of emotional experiences and the trend in the direction of their elimination suggests that religious education may underestimate the importance of the feeling element in religion. Just what place emotion should occupy in religion may be in doubt, but few persons would be so bold as to allot it no place

whatever. The emotional element in religion is as universal as religion itself,<sup>3</sup> a fact which creates a presumption that there exists a necessary connection between the two.

Men are moved and their actions motivated most powerfully by emotion and not by coldly intellectual processes; this is well known to revivalists, advertisers, journalists, orators, and persons familiar with the methods of such workers. Impelled by strong feeling men will assume attitudes and perform actions which rational argument cannot induce them to assume and perform. The conclusion would seem to be obvious that no agency seeking to control attitudes and conduct can afford to omit so powerful a driving force from its regimen. The fact that persons of ministerial parentage tend to undergo more emotional awakenings hints that the feeling element is likely to emerge when religious training is more carefully supervised and religious elements kept constantly in the environment; the fact that persons having such experiences are themselves more prone to enter religious vocations indicates the relatively stronger impression made upon the life by feeling. Both facts are of significance to religious education. History, psychology, the facts of experience, and common observation all warn that religious education will at its peril suffer emotion to depart and reduce its discipline to a routine technique based on rational considerations alone.

Further, and akin to the point just mentioned, religious education faces the danger of being dominated by the mechanical spirit and reducing religion to a set of moral

<sup>3</sup> For illustrations of the connection between emotion and religion among many peoples, see Stratton, *Psychology of the Religious Life*, pp. 105-129.

habits. Workers in the field have already deemed it necessary to protest at this point.<sup>4</sup>

Certainly nothing could be more important than the formation of moral habits, but such habits do not constitute religion. Most religious persons believe that moral habits are not likely to be successfully cultivated among a very large section of the population save as they are grounded in and motivated by religious faith and sanctions. Though moral actions and religion have always been intimately related, they have never been identified by persons authorized to speak for religion. An identification of them by religious education will mean the cutting of the ground from beneath its own feet, since no separate educational agency is necessary for habit formation on a mechanical basis.

That this danger is present is indicated by the large occupation of religious education with technique and the relative neglect of the fundamental philosophy of the Christian religion. Shelves of volumes on method, organization, curriculum, and tests are available, yet no worker in the field has as yet attempted seriously to interpret the underlying philosophy of Christianity into modern educational terms. This point will be referred to later, but here it may be said that it is no disparagement of scientific technique to insist that of more fundamental importance is the philosophy to which such technique is to be applied.

In the third place, religious education is in danger of forgetting the power and need of conversion, defined as reclamation by an emotional cataclysm. A reading of

<sup>4</sup> Fiske: *Purpose in Teaching Religion*, pp. 81-83; Matthews, "Let Religious Education Beware," in *The Christian Century*, March 24, 1927.

textbooks in the field shows that this experience finds little or no place in the formulated aims of religious education and is usually passed over lightly or actually discounted.\*

The gradual unfolding of the capacity for religion in original nature into full-blown religious consciousness and Christian character, with never an estrangement from God nor a serious moral lapse, is indeed a possibility and "a consummation devoutly to be wished." But neither this desirability nor the encouraging nature of the data herein considered can obscure the fact that multiplied millions of persons undergo no such development.<sup>†</sup> The religious problem involved in the character already definitely set in the irreligious mold and habituated in sin—and the nation teems with persons of such character—is practically impossible of solution by the ordinary processes of religious culture. But that the phenomenon of conversion can alter character and attitude is a fact so well attested in history as to be undoubted. Many psychological sins have been committed in its name, but it is nevertheless a genuine experience which has effected transformations impossible to ordinary forces and influences from the time when St. Paul fell blinded upon the Damascan roadway down to the present day. In view of the prevalent need and the demonstrated power of conversion to meet the same, religious education, while

\* See Betts, *New Program of Religious Education*, Ch. II. Betts not only defines "evangelism" as it never was defined by the Church but actually gives the heading "Conflicting Currents" to his chapter on the relation of religious education to evangelism and lists what he terms the viewpoints of each in parallel columns as opposed to each other and mutually exclusive.

<sup>†</sup> The *Interchurch World Survey* in 1920 reported that three out of five children of Protestant parentage receive no religious training and that nearly thirty million are growing up "in spiritual illiteracy." See the American volume of these surveys, sections on education.

assiduously striving to prevent the necessity of reclamation, should not discredit or neglect to include in its program the phenomenon which, for multitudes of the world's population, offers the only hope of a vital contact with God.

### *The Mystical Element in Religion*

From all the trends observable in the data studied, the general situation, and the dangers just enumerated, there seems to emerge the need for one outstanding suggestion. It is that religious education must on no account omit the mystical element from its regime.<sup>7</sup>

Herein lies an insidious danger. The concentration of workers on method, the endeavors to perfect objective tests, the stressing of habit formation, and the prevalence of the materialistic aspects of psychology all tend to an obscuring of the more spiritual factors. The importance of these things is, of course, recognized, but it is not too much to say that no perfection of technique can hope to maintain religion as a vital factor in the life of the race when the mystical has once departed therefrom.

It is of significance that the present age which accords supremacy to the methods and attitudes of natural science should at the same time witness a revival of interest in mysticism; books on this subject are streaming from the press into the hands of persons of the highest

<sup>7</sup> Mysticism may be defined as the noetic element in religion; it is the consciousness or belief on the part of an individual that he realizes truth, reality, or God directly, intuitively, or without sensory processes. Miss Evelyn Underhill calls mysticism "the direct intuition or experience of God," and a mystic "a person who has, to a greater or less degree, such a direct experience,—one whose religion and life are centered, not merely on an accepted belief and practice, but on that which he regards as first-hand personal knowledge." *The Mystics of the Church*, pp. 9, 10. No separate "spiritual sense" or "religious instinct" is implied in mysticism.

culture.\* In such an age as the present it should be remembered that humanity never has and doubtless never will recognize religion as a "science" in the ordinary acceptance of that word; it demands of religion a philosophy which transcends the scientific and offers a livable hypothesis concerning the eternal mysteries of the nature of God, of contact with the divine, of redemption, of immortality. Nothing short of such a livable hypothesis will satisfy the race, which will abandon religion when it fails to offer an answer to the deepest cravings of human nature.

Here emerges an outstanding demand, previously hinted at. It is that religious education seek a firm basis in a reinterpretation of the fundamental philosophy of the Christian religion.

This philosophy is contained in the great doctrines of the Church, which set forth hypotheses concerning God, redemption, and eternity. These doctrines are indeed expressed in the terminology of the past and embody conceptions which the modern mind experiences difficulty in entertaining. But they are of psychological origin and underlaid with profound psychological truth, in virtue whereof the religious population clings to them with unflinching fidelity. If religious education is to secure and maintain a rapport with the heart of religious humanity, it must base itself in the Christian philosophy and reinterpret the doctrines thereof into its own terms.

Yet the Christian philosophy occupies a small place in the literature of present-day religious education. The reason for this neglect is doubtless to be found in the fact

\* Fully a hundred volumes on mysticism have appeared since the dawn of the century. For a long list of such works see the bibliography in Hermann: *The Meaning and Value of Mysticism*.

that relatively few of the leaders in religious education are trained in the subject matter thereof.\* Into the field are going an increasing number of women and laymen without previous theological training, who must deal almost exclusively with methods and the more obvious aspects of Biblical literature and religious principles. In the field of general education there has been the complaint that teachers were well equipped with content material but wanting in technique; religious education should not reverse the situation by coming into the hands of leaders who possess technique without content.

There is here no implication that success in religious education demands a theological education. It does seem, however, that only persons with a profound training in Christian philosophy and modern Biblical scholarship can reinterpret theology and provide for religious education the philosophic basis now demanded and which seems necessary to save religious education from superficiality and prevent its reduction to a mechanical system of habit formation.

\* Dr. Shailer Matthews raises this question in an article, "Let Religious Education Beware!" in *The Christian Century* (March 24, 1927). Dr. George Herbert Betts, in a reply, admits the point that many leaders in religious education know no theology. See these articles and also a reply to both, "A Pastor Views Religious Education," by John M. Versteeg, in *The Christian Century*, June 2, 1927.





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